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For Sarah,
who couldn't be there

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S.T.
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ABBREVIATIONS

ACLI	Associazioni Cristiane dei Lavoratori Italiani
ANPI	Associazione Nazionale dei Partigiani Italiani
AO	Avanguardia Operaia
AOU	Assemblea Operaia Unitaria
CRAC	Coordinamento per la Riforma del Aborto e della Contracezione
CGIL	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro
CISL	Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori
CUB	Comitati Unitari di Base
DC	Democrazia Cristiana
ENI	Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi
FGCI	Federazione Giovanile Comunista Italiana
FGS	Federazione Giovanile Socialista
FIM	Federazione Italiana Metalmeccanici
FIOM	Federazione Impiegati Operai Metallurgici
GS	Gioventù Studentesca
IRI	Istutito per la Ricostruzione Industriale
MPL	Movimento Politico dei Lavoratori
MS	Movimento Studentesco
MSI	Movimento Sociale Italiano
NAP	Nuclei Armati Proletari
OLC	Organizzazione dei Lavoratori Comunisti
PCI	Partito Comunista Italiano
PDUP	Partito Democratico di Unità Proletaria
PLI	Partito Liberale Italiano
PRI	Partito Repubblicano Italiano
PSDI	Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano
PSI	Partito Socialista Italiano
PSIUP	Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria
PSU	Partito Socialista Unificato
RAI	Radio Televisione Italiana
SUNIA	Sindacati Unitari Nazionali di Inquilini e Assegnatari
SVIMEZ	Associazione per lo Sviluppo del Mezzogiorno d'Italia
UDI	Unione delle Donne Italiane

UGI	Unione Goliardica Italiana
UIL	Unione Italiana del Lavoro
UML	Unione dei Marxisti Leninisti

INTRODUCTION

From the mid-1960s on, a new wave of protest began to sweep over Western Europe. Using direct, confrontational, and sometimes violent collective action, people erupted into the streets, the campuses, and the factories demanding new rights, access to power, and sometimes revolution. With a combination of threat and ridicule, they disrupted institutions, opposed elites, and attacked authorities. These protests marked the beginning of a new wave of social movements.

The protests were first greeted with smiles and incomprehension. But as youthful spontaneity gave way to organized protest, and peaceful demonstrations led to clashes with police, intellectuals were ready with diagnoses from the past: 'Anarchism!' said some; 'Utopia!' responded others. As the movements proceeded, the critics saw little but violence or utopia, and even sympathizers began to be disillusioned with the excesses of the movements.

In retrospect, however, the decade from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s appears in a more positive light. For when the dust of disorder had settled, it became clear that the boundaries of mass politics had been extended. There were changes in public policy and in the composition of the political class. New frames of meaning were introduced into what Gramsci called the 'common sense' of capitalist democracies. More people were taking part in decisions affecting their lives, and new forms of participation had been added to the repertoire of participation. Disorder contributed to the broadening of democracy where it was strong and to its consolidation where it was weak.

In the wake of the 1960s, social scientists, like politicians, attempted to grasp what had happened. They were divided in their assessments. A first group was repelled by the disorder: they regarded the period as a mad aberration from postwar capitalism's progress towards abundance (Crozier, Huntington, and Watanuki 1975). The conflicts of the sixties reminded them of how democracy had been undermined by disorder between the wars. But they forgot, as Przeworski reminds us, that democracy is always a contingent outcome of conflict and has never been advanced without struggle (1986).

A second group focused on the social actors involved in the new movements. They saw a generation of young people, confident in their prosperity and security, revolting against the materialism of their parents and against the growth ethic of the postwar world (Feuer 1969). These observers thought revolt was reactive and studied it on the level of individual attitudes (Inglehart 1971, 1977). They were not hostile to attitude change, but by detaching it from its sources in class structure, they isolated it from people's interests and values and thus detached it from the political process.

A third group—the proponents of a 'new social movement' school—had a better grip on the new character of the movements, on their rejection of the existing party system, and on their new symbolic and cultural content.[1] This group saw a new political paradigm growing out of late capitalist society (Offe 1985). They were correct, but they so emphasized the 'newness' of the movements that they failed to notice their symbiosis with the old politics. For although the new movements rejected the existing political ground, they would prove to be more deeply rooted in it than either they or their enthusiastic interpreters understood. Unless this relationship between old and new, politics and movements, is grasped, the impact of the new movements on society cannot be judged.

Evidence was a problem for all these observers. The literature that emerged in the wake of 1968 was stronger on evocation than on empirical research.[2] For example, Alain Touraine, France's foremost interpreter of the new movements, at first depicted the student movement of 1968 as *the* new social movement (1971). But he failed to ask whether it was typical of the entire wave of mobilization or was a mere 'moment of madness' that would sputter out rapidly when mobilization declined (Zolberg 1972). If the former, then the movement might hold the key to the future of capitalist democracy; if the latter, then its influence would be less direct—to use Aristide Zolberg's image, a floodtide that left only alluvial deposits behind

---

[1] There are too many theorists of the 'new social movement' school to cite them either fairly or exhaustively here. For a review, see Bert Klandermans and Sidney Tarrow's Introduction to Klandermans, Kriesi, and Tarrow (eds.) (1988).

[2] Notable exceptions can be found in the work of Kriesi (1981), for Switzerland; Brand *et al.* (1983), for West Germany; Rucht (1985, 1988), for Germany and France; and Burstein (1985), Jenkins (1985), and McAdam (1982), for the US.

(1972: 206). The 'new' social movement theorists were not geared to looking at these alluvial deposits, but for the student of political and social change they are more significant than the flood that left them in its wake.

Was the wave of protest that began in the mid-1960s a brief tilt of the postwar political equilibrium? If so, then the movements could be explained as youthful rebellion and studied as a manifestation of alienation or anomie. Was it a permanent break with the past? If so, then a dramatic overturn in the postwar political-economic settlement would follow. Or was it less significant in itself than for the deeper changes it signalled in western societies and in their repertoire of participation? If this was the case, the changes would be harder to discern and, to understand them, one would would have to analyse the entire structure of conflict, and not only its most dramatic outward features.

This final view is the guiding assumption of this book. I shall argue that, unless we place the movements of the late 1960s within their national and historic contexts, we shall not be able to judge either their newness, their breadth, or their impact on democracy. For as Alessandro Pizzorno observes, if we do not pay attention to the cyclicity of protest, then 'at every new upstart of a wave of conflict we shall be induced to think that we are at the verge of a revolution; and when the downswing appears, we shall predict the end of class conflict' (1978: 291). This book is built on Pizzorno's premise.

I THE SIXTIES: A CYCLE OF PROTEST

What happened in Western Europe and the United States in the 1960s and 1970s was, I shall argue, but the latest in a sequence of cycles of protest that grow periodically out of the basic conflicts in capitalist society. Though the content of the cycle was new—as were, to some extent, its actors and forms of action—it followed a parabola similar to that of past waves of mobilization. Conservatives might find it full of dangers, but if it followed the logic of most past cycles—from rupture to institutionalization, from struggle to reform—then it would have a positive effect on the democracy that they claimed to defend.

One problem that complicated analysis of the new movements was that they varied greatly from country to country. In the United

States, the civil rights and anti-war movements were the most dramatic; in Britain, industrial relations were the major site of insurgency; in France, the student and worker movements of May coincided, and both rapidly collapsed; in West Germany, student movements soon gave way to *bürgerinitiativen*, on the one hand, and to terrorism, on the other. And in Italy, student, worker, and middle-class reform movements produced a *maggio strisciante* (sliding May) that lasted well into the 1970s.

This diversity poses a problem for builders of holistic structural models. For although the protest wave originated in the general structural problems of advanced capitalism, its forms were conditioned by the particular political institutions and opportunities of each country and social sector. National politics shaped how people protested, the terms in which they couched their demands, and also how elites responded. Moreover, the 'early risers' in the protest wave and elites' reactions to them conditioned how the next wave of conflicts would be fought. Finally, when the cycle ended, it did so in terms of each country's political and structural conflicts.

These observations make clear that it is futile to study movements apart from their political context or detached from the cycle of protest of which they are a part. For although a particular group's grievance might stem from its structural position, its political actions and the reactions to them are conditioned by political factors: by which other groups were protesting at the same time, by the repressive capacities or facilitative strategies of elites, by the potential allies that are available in the political system, and, most important, by the general level of mobilization of the population. Politics also conditions the relations among contesting groups, as they compete for support, outbid one another, and ultimately diverge towards violence on the one hand and institutionalization on the other. The movements have to be seen as part of the general cycle of protest in which they arise.

There was much that was new in the movements of these years. But the explosive chemistry of the cycle came neither from its newness nor from its oldness, but from combinations of new and old, movement and institution. Where political arrangements were unstable and allies were available to the movements, the wave of mobilization was prolonged; where alignments were stable and elites repressive, opportunities for protest evaporated and demobilization quickly followed. Disorder grew out of the basic conflict structure of capitalist society, but it was through each country's politics that the shape and size of the protest cycle were determined.

Finally, the cycle ended, but rather than leading to a new political settlement, some of the movements produced sects and terrorist bands, others evolved into parties or interest groups, and a large number of people who had been socialized within them filtered into the existing party system. As mobilization declined, elites reasserted their authority through different combinations of realignment, repression, and reform. What had apparently begun as movements *against* politics ended *within* politics. The cycle of protest provided the raw materials for political consolidation.

II WHY STUDY ITALY AND WHY ANALYSE PROTEST?

Given these assumptions, we could proceed in several different ways: by going back into history to trace a number of different cycles of protest; by comparing the shape and content of the most recent cycle in different countries; or by focusing on a single country that lies within the international context but manifests the distinctive effects of its particular history and politics. I shall focus on the cycle of protests of the late 1960s and early 1970s in one country—Italy between 1965 and 1975.

Why Study Italy?

Between 1965 and 1975 a long wave of collective action rose and fell in Italian society. It first broke through the crust of convention in the German-speaking provinces of the north-east and then appeared in organized strikes and university protests, eventually spreading to workers and high school students, doctors and patients, railroad men and commuters, bishops and priests, and rival regions and cities. It ended a decade later in a combination of violence and institutionalization, but not before Italians had reached a peak of mass mobilization unlike anything the country had experienced since the tragic years of 1919–22.[3]

If Europe in the late 1960s is remembered by one time and place, it is not Italy, but France in May 1968.[4] But while the French Events were spectacular, their duration was brief and their social effects were quickly reversed (Salvati 1981). The Italian cycle began earlier, lasted longer, and affected society and politics more profoundly than did the French one. These facts alone demand that it receive much more attention than the little it has attracted until now.[5]

---

[3] The period 1943–8, when fascism had been defeated but the postwar political settlement was not yet established, rivals ours for the intensity of conflict. Much of the conflict in this earlier period, however, was limited to the factory, in contrast to our period, when it was much more broadly based.

Italy has been largely ignored by theorists of new social movements,[6] perhaps because it is usually portrayed as a den of corruption, a country beset by factionalism and political instability, and weakened by the incapacity of its governments to govern. It has been called a 'Republic without Government' (Allum 1973) that 'survives by not governing' (Di Palma 1977); it is ruled by 'imperfect two-party dominance' (Galli and Prandi 1970) and is thought to be paralysed by 'polarized pluralism' (Sartori 1966). A typical view was published by a British author in 1975:

> The most cursory glance suggests that the motive forces in national life have lost momentum, or that their movement is downhill. Governments do not govern, but struggle to survive. Is the country on the verge of a revolution, or of a complete breakdown in society? (Earle 1975: 9)

Given all the evils that these writers have decried, how could Italy have survived the disorders of the 1960s and the terrorism and economic crisis of the 1970s and remain the essentially democratic country it is today?[7] Students of democracy have been obsessed by the apparent lack of stability in Italian politics. But while the effects of disorder on democracy can be lethal, we should not make the mistake of concluding that stability is either the most important aspect of democracy or that—as some students of democratic theory maintain—it is democracy *tout court*. A democracy in which disorder was impossible would be no democracy at all.

---

[4] Indeed, many writers unconsciously subsume the Italian *sessantotto* under the Events of May. For a typical analysis, see the 'transalpine' one offered by Martin Clark (1984: 374), who has perhaps forgotten that the Italian student movement anticipated the French May by at least a year.

[5] The existing literature is predominantly made up of personal memoirs, apologies, and ideological or organizational histories, much of it focusing inordinately upon the student movement. To my knowledge, only one attempt at a scholarly reconstruction of the period has been made, Robert Lumley's excellent dissertation, 'Social Movements in Italy, 1968–78' (1983). Lumley's valuable insights, based on his research in Milan, inform the treatment of the student and worker movements presented later in this book. I am particularly grateful to him for allowing me to cite his work.

[6] The major exceptions are Alberoni (1968, 1977, 1979), Melucci (1980, 1982, 1985, 1988) and della Porta (1981, 1987, 1988).

[7] For examples of new approaches to Italian politics, see Lange and Tarrow (1980), Spotts and Weiser (1986), Lange and Regini (1988), and especially LaPalombara (1987).

In sharp contrast with the inherited tradition of interpretation, I shall argue that during the late 1960s and early 1970s Italian democracy not only survived its crisis but emerged as a mature capitalist democracy. The protest cycle left the country with an expanded repertoire of democratic participation, with a broadened policy agenda, and with a new political culture. The protests of the late 1960s and 1970s brought a period of political change that was at first dangerous, but was ultimately fruitful for democracy.

Why Analyse Protest?

An international wave of mobilization like that of the late 1960s and early 1970s has many facets: heightened social awareness, increased concern with public issues, the rise of new ideologies and social movements, the realignment of party systems. Scholars on each side of the Atlantic have focused on different aspects,[8] but whatever their differences, they no longer think of protest as abnormal or 'anomic' political behaviour. There is growing agreement that most people do not go out into the streets because they want to get their heads bashed in or make revolution; they do so on behalf of interests, values, and solidarities.

But while students in the wake of the 1960s have begun to regard social movement activity as normal, it has been harder to find agreement about how to study it. Some have focused on the attitudes of the movements' activists, others on their organizations, still others on their ideologies and cultural meaning. Fewer scholars have looked systematically at their forms of political action and at how these have evolved over time.[9] Yet unless we trace the forms of activity people use, how these reflect their demands, and their interaction with opponents and elites, we cannot understand either the magnitude or the dynamics of change in politics and society.

---

[8] American sociologists and, to a lesser extent, British sociologists are most likely to focus on mass attitudes and party alignments, on movement organizations, or on violence. They have paid less attention to broad historic trends and to basic value and cultural changes. Berger (1979) and Gamson (1988), however, are two exceptions. In contrast, broader social movements and basic value change are the main foci of continental scholarship, which has given less attention to problems of organization and interest.

On attitudes to protest, see Barnes and Kaase (1979), Inglehart (1971, 1977, 1981), Muller (1979), and Sniderman (1981). On movement organizations, see the research collected in McCarthy and Zald (1979), Freeman (1983), Katzenstein and Mueller (1987), and Zald and McCarthy (1987). For studies of violence, see Fierabend, Fierabend, and Gurr (1972), Graham and Gurr (1969), Hibbs (1973), and Gurr (1980). The literature on new social movements is enormous. For a review and bibliography, see Klandermans, Kriesi, and Tarrow (eds.) (1988).

[9] Notable exceptions are the work of Burstein (1985), Gamson (1975), Jenkins (1985), McAdam (1982), Piven and Cloward (1977), and Tilly (1969), who—though he did not study the same period—has done the most to direct attention to the systematic study of collective action.

In this book, I shall show that a protest cycle begins with conventional patterns of conflict within existing organizations and institutions. As it gathers strength, new actors use expressive and confrontational forms of action, demonstrating to others less daring than themselves that the system is vulnerable to disruption and that they have grievances in common. This expands the range of contention to new sectors and institutions, but without the confrontation or the excitement of the 'early risers'. Confrontation gives way to deliberate violence only towards the end of the cycle, as mobilization declines, repression increases, people defect to interest groups and institutions, and extremists are left to compete for support from a shrinking social base.

This focus on protest immediately raises the question of definition. I shall define protest as the use of disruptive collective action aimed at institutions, elites, authorities, or other groups, on behalf of the collective goals of the actors or of those they claim to represent. In other words, I regard protest, not as a category of action distinct from more institutionalized forms of political expression, but as an extreme form of such expression that, like the others, is the outcome of a calculus of risk, cost, and incentive.

People protest either when other ways of expressing their interests and values are not available or when the incentives to protest seem to outweigh its costs and risks. A protest *cycle* occurs, not when a few people are willing to take extraordinary risks for extreme goals, but when the costs of collective action are so low and the incentives so great that even individuals or groups that would normally not engage in protest feel encouraged to do so. This focuses our attention, not on macrostructural causes, but on the political conditions in which the cycle begins: on splits among elites, on the growing resources of marginal groups, on the diffusion of new frames of meaning within the society.

Thus in a protest cycle, not only does the propensity of those *outside* the polity to protest increase (Tilly 1978); but unconventional political activity increases *within* it. This creates possibilities—however temporary—for coalitions between members and outsiders that can threaten to overturn dominant political coalitions. It is these potential coalitions across the frontiers of the polity that impel elites to act; it is when they fail to develop and mobilization declines that elites move to repress dissent.

What factors lead to demobilization? If, in such periods, protest is both visible and general, it is not necessarily costless nor is it universally approved. On the contrary, cycles of protest produce counter-movements, violence, and political backlash, new repressive strategies, and thence demobilization. Cycles end as they begin, with declining mobilization and through a re-integration of protest within the state.[10]

We shall study protest—rather than changes in attitudes, ideology, or culture—because it is the major indicator of the level of mobilization to the population and the elite. Publicly mounted disruptive activity is not the only sign that social movements are stirring; but it is the major way that elites, authorities, and other social groups *know* that they are stirring. On the one hand, it provides the evidence that allows people to learn, either that the system is vulnerable, or that protest does not pay; on the other, it is the evidence that elites and authorities use in deciding among different mixes of repression or facilitation. Protest not only tells us what people demand and what they are willing to do to gain it; it is a signal to others of the current odds of different strategies in the democratic class struggle.

III THE PLAN OF THE STUDY

Since this study has theoretical aims and is rooted in a fairly technical literature, I begin in Chapter 1 by defining and delineating protest cycles, by describing the techniques that I have used to study collective action, and by outlining a rough model of the political process that will be used in the remainder of the book.

In schematic summary, I shall argue that a protest cycle develops when conflicts in a society are both deep and can be generalized, and when new political opportunities appear for groups within and outside the polity. These conflicts and opportunities produce a large and self-conscious social movement sector made up of both competing and cooperating groups on behalf of their interests and values.

With a logic similar to that of a business cycle, disruption begins in a few sectors of intense conflict, where early successes create both opportunities and costs: opportunities for new movement organizations and for people in secondary sectors to apply the themes, the forms of organization, and even the demands of the 'early risers'; and costs for those whose interests are affected by the first wave of mobilization. Although protest begins where structural conflict is greatest, it soon spreads throughout the society by imitation and solidarity, by innovation, direct response, and proselytism by activists from the early movements.

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[10] This issue marks my major difference from some—but not all—of the proponents of the 'new social movement' school. For a reasoned critique of the approach proposed here, see Alberto Melucci (1988).

The peak of mobilization contains a combination of spontaneity and organization, but movement organizations which have grown out of it force the pace of diffusion. They are joined by interest groups, parties, and professional associations. Faced by a rising tide of mobilization and by aggressive new competitors, they adopt more aggressive forms of activity, institutionalize them, and attract supporters away from the new movements. As mass mobilization declines, still newer movement organizations seek space on the social movement sector by using extreme forms of confrontation, broader demands, and violence.

The advantage of looking at an entire cycle of protest is that, rather than focusing on mass attitudes, collective action, or movement organizations alone, we can relate the parabola of mass mobilization to the creation, the strategies, and the development of movement organizations and to the responses of the parties and interest groups they challenge. The social movement sector expands only when popular mobilization permits, but it does so through the actions of organizations. It contracts when people become tired, gain satisfaction for their demands, or are frightened off the streets. Two key corollaries of this dialectic between mass mobilization and organization are: that the expanding phase of the cycle is the result, not of pure spontaneity, but of the competition between movement organizations and their old competitors for mass support; and second, that the decline of the cycle results when mass pressure is absorbed into organizations and new groups try to outbid the old ones with greater militancy, ideology, and violence.

The rest of the book is divided into three parts, corresponding to three increasingly specific levels of collective action: at the broadest level, the forms, actors, and demands in collective action in general; within that broad area, three of the main social movements studied in Italy; and within the movements, the role and strategies of movement organizations.

Part One traces Italian collective action from 1965 to 1975 at the broadest level of mass mobilization. I isolate four of its main aspects. In Chapter 2 I focus on the economic and political developments of the early 1960s and the political opportunity structure they created. In Chapter 3 I show how the rise and fall of different forms of collective action conform to my model of a protest cycle. Chapter 4 surveys both the succession of actors who used collective action and their main opponents. Chapter 5 focuses on grievances, demands, and ideologies, and highlights the two main frames of meaning that helped to diffuse the protests of the period—workerism and autonomy.

In Part Two I analyse three of the major movements that developed during the period. Chapter 6 describes the 'early risers'—university students—and the effect of their insurgency in triggering what I call the intensive peak of mobilization. Chapter 7 deals with a second core group, the industrial workers, in relation to both the labour unions and the New Left. Chapter 8 illustrates how broadly social protest was diffused through the cycle by an analysis of insurgency in the most traditional institution in the country, the Catholic Church.

In Part Three I focus on the creation and competitive dynamics of social movement organizations. Chapter 9 is both a survey of the new 'extraparliamentary' Left and an attempt to show how it diffused collective action. Chapter 10 focuses on an archetypical 'workerist' group of the mid-1960s, Potere Operaio Toscano, and on the effect that the rise of the student movement had upon it. Chapter 11 analyses the effects of working-class insurgency on that group's successor, Lotta Continua, and how the decline of mass mobilization led it, first towards violence and then towards institutionalization.

The two concluding chapters examine what I see as the three principal outcomes of the Italian cycle: violence, institutionalization, and democratic growth. Chapter 12 shows why some groups chose the route of institutionalization, while others chose violence. It also explores how the two tendencies, so opposed to one another on the surface, were actually symbiotic. In the concluding chapter I turn to the effects of the cycle on democracy. I argue that, while Italians are most likely to remember the period for violence and terrorism, the most enduring outcomes were more positive: the socialization of a generation into politics through new forms of popular collective action, the diffusion of new frames of meaning, and the expansion of the repertoire of participation.

Protest, Frances Piven and Richard Cloward have written, seldom succeeds and is usually defeated. But it is almost the only resource of the poor and the excluded (1977). By daring to challenge elites, authorities or other groups, protesters force their demands on to the polity, encouraging less marginal groups to wage their own protests, and leading opportunistic elites sometimes to respond with reform.

In the process, democracy is put at risk. It sometimes fails tragically, as was the case in Weimar Germany and pre-Fascist Italy. But this happened because of the complicity of elites. The story of Italy from 1965 to 1975 teaches that even young democracies can have extraordinary power to adapt to protest cycles. When they do so, it is through the expansion of participation, the institutionalization of protest, and the inclusion of new groups in the polity. It is from this perspective that I shall examine the relations between disorder and democracy in Italy.

1

POLITICS AND PROTEST CYCLES

COMMENTING on the business cycle, Peter Gourevitch observes:

> Seven fat years, seven lean ones—the biblical story expresses the notion of economic cycle . . . .
> Pharaoh's dream may be wrong about the length of each particular phase, but in the notion of cycle it captures an important aspect of reality. (1986: 9)

Business cycles are irregular in length, unpredictable in origin, and variable in form. But they recur often enough and have given rise to a sufficiently extensive literature to make them a staple of economic theory. Not so political cycles.

Throughout history there have been regular variations in political phenomena: the rise and fall of empires, reform cycles, critical elections, cycles of political involvement. Yet the study of political cycles has rarely gone beyond the most generic classification or investigations of their causes. What needs to be explained is not why people periodically petition, strike, demonstrate, riot, loot, and burn, but rather why so many of them do so at particular times in their history, and if there is a logical sequence to their actions.

Do protest cycles begin with violence and riot, or with relatively institutionalized forms of behaviour? At their peak, are the original forms of behaviour merely generalized to other groups and sectors, or do the forms of action themselves become more radical? Is the sequence truly dynamic—that is, does one phase of the cycle actually produce the next? Finally, how do such periods end—in integration and re-institutionalization? In breakdown and violence? Or in a combination of the two?

In this study, I shall argue that people go out into the streets and protest in response to deeply felt grievances and opportunities. But this produces a protest cycle only when structural cleavages are both deep and visible and when opportunities for mass protest are opened up by the political system. I shall argue that cycles begin within institutions through organized forms of collective action. They proceed from there to an intensive peak of mobilization and challenge. It is the latter that provides the models of disruption, the personnel, the issues, and the interpretative frames of meaning for an increase in more conventional protest within the polity. For most people the spread of protest takes increasingly more conventional forms, while a few—social movement organizers—try to radicalize it into a general assault on the system. The cycle declines through a symbiotic combination of violence and institutionalization.

I ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS

I have defined protest as disruptive collective action aimed at institutions, elites, authorities, or other groups on behalf of the collective goals of actors or of those they claim to represent. There are five main components in this definition:

First, protests are *direct*, not representative, collective actions whose authors reject institutional mediation.

Second, protests aim primarily at *disruption* and not specifically at violence. Though violence is the ultimate form of disruption, protesters more frequently attempt to disrupt economic processes, government business, and the routines of everyday life than to take lives or destroy property (Eisinger 1973).

Third, protests are *expressive*. By this I do not mean that they cannot raise instrumental demands, but only that these demands are often couched in symbolically charged and non-negotiable terms (Pizzorno 1978).

Fourth, however expressive they are, protests involve *claims* that impinge on other groups or on political or economic elites.

Fifth, though they use unconventional actions in expressive ways, protesters are *strategic* in their choice of issues, targets, and goals. As in political and economic decisions, the choice to participate in collective action is the result of the interplay of incentives, probable risks, and perceived costs.

It follows from these assumptions that the probability that people will use disruptive direct action varies as a function of the depth of their grievances, the availability of alternative means of expression, the perceived costs and risks of the collective action, and the presence or absence of prospective organizers. Protest can increase even when substantive incentives remain unchanged, for if the costs of collective action go down and the opportunities for it increase, people are more likely to protest, and vice versa. Protest becomes a protest *cycle* when it is diffused to several sectors of the population, is highly organized, and is widely used as an instrument to put forward demands.

In some versions of the theory of cycles, whole generations are thought to be uprooted in response to some structural cause (Heberle 1951). Young people 'rise' against their elders, forcing 'the system' to repress them, give in to some demands and coopt them, or to collapse (Feuer 1969). A new and opposing generation rises, whose concerns shift from public involvements to the private sphere (Hirschman 1982), and who become the object of its own childrens' rebellion (Feuer 1969). Such theories are often organic and holistic, making them difficult to operationalize and easy to debunk (Buerklin 1985). The common assumption that leads to such holistic theories, as Buerklin observes, is that in history the type of society or polity entirely repeats itself (1987: 1).

Recent theorists have been more circumspect. They look for cyclicity in only part of a social or political system—in voter attitudes, critical elections, electoral business cycles. This is a more realistic approach, but one that requires us to 'separate *different dynamics* of change in *distinct components* (or dimensions) of the political system' (Buerklin 1987: 2). While this may be easy to do for elections or policy cycles, collective action has the distinct characteristic that conflicts arising in one part of a society are quickly diffused to others, encountering different sets of expectations, interests and institutions, and taking off in different directions from where they began.

An example will be helpful here. The strike is one of the most common forms of modern collective action. When used to support collective bargaining with management, it is conventional, ritualized, and predictable. But should the strike involve postal workers, pensioners will not get their government cheques (Accornero 1985); shift it to doctors, and patients will go without care; let it spread to students at a school for the blind, and a symbolic political weapon has been arrayed against the state. We need a concept that will embrace all of the participants in social protest at any given time; we shall find it in the concept of the *social movement sector*.

If strikes can ripple through a society, imagine the variety of outcomes that are possible in the 'career' of an entire protest wave that is made up of a wave of strikes, petitions, demonstrations, occupations, riots, and organized violence. To describe both the actual variety of collective actions and their development over time, we shall adopt Tilly's concept of the *repertoire of contention*.

What leads people who normally accept authority to turn to contentious forms of collective action? The time is long past when social scientists envisaged the people as a mob itching to rebel. People are induced to protest for the same reasons that they engage in conventional political activity, only less often: when they see it as being in their interest and when the opportunity presents itself to do so. We shall develop a general framework for the inducement to protest in the concept of the *structure of political opportunity*. It will also help us to understand why people cease to protest when they do.

What do people protest for? To transform society or overthrow the state, to satisfy their own desires or physical needs, or to try to help others less fortunate than themselves? Only ideologues would claim a single cause; historians know that periods of turmoil produce a bewildering variety of demands and grievances. The same is true of the structure of grievances and demands that we shall encounter. But there is an important exception: the generation and diffusion throughout the cycle of a few, key *interpretative themes* which movement organizers use to mobilize people in various sectors and population groups (Snow and Benford 1988).

Once it has begun, what leads protest to be diffused to new groups and sectors? Is diffusion spontaneous or organized? We shall propose that diffusion, although it is often autonomous, follows an organized logic through *competition and tactical innovation* within the social movement sector. Movement organizers seek new support groups by bringing protest into new sectors. We shall see, in addition, that a major reason for the decline of mobilization is that this competitive tactical innovation eventually leads to both absorption of protest and violence. Let us explain each of these concepts, before turning to the dynamic of the protest cycle.

II THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT SECTOR

We shall refer to the configuration of individuals and groups willing to engage in disruptive direct action against others to achieve collective goals as the *social movement sector*.[1] The movement sector increases and then declines in size as a cycle unfolds, in part through an increase in the amount of collective action among the same people, and in part through the mobilization of groups who would not normally engage in it.

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[1] This definition is narrower than the concept offered by Garner and Zald (1985: 120), for whom the social movement sector means '...social movement activity largely oriented towards change that is achieved in the differentiated political arena . . . the *configuration* of social movements, the structure of antagonistic, competing and/or cooperating movements which in turn is part of a larger structure of action . . . that may include parties, state bureaucracies, the media, pressure groups, churches, and a variety of other organizational actors in a society'.

What kind of groups use protest? Are they organized social movements? Ordinary people acting spontaneously in *ad hoc* groups? Interest associations caught up in a temporary frenzy? Or are all three?

Movements

Protest has frequently been associated with the term 'social movement', which has been defined variously, but which I, with Tilly, define as an 'organised, sustained, self-conscious challenge to existing authorities'. A special class of these movements, what Tilly calls national social movements, 'pits challengers against the people who run national states' (1984: 304).

Social movements, argues Tilly, are a specifically modern phenomenon. More enduring than the ephemeral gatherings whose protests punctuate the history of early modern states, they pursue broader aims than the achievement of a particular goal, seeking instead 'a set of changes considerably larger than the suspension of one tax or another . . . ' (Tilly 1984: 299). They produce and attract formal social movement organizations, which attempt to harness their energies to broader policy programmes (McCarthy and Zald 1977).

Collective action has a special function for social movement organizations, and the latter thus have a propulsive role in a protest cycle. Social movements lack conventional organization and resources, but by making highly visible, dramatic, and extreme claims on elites or authorities, organizers not only attract and influence new supporters, but reinforce the solidarity of old ones and gain the attention of both enemies and allies. Collective action is a *resource* that social movement organizers use in place of the incentives available to more conventional groups (Lipsky 1968).

This affinity of movement organizations for protest implies that, although protest centres around people's interests and values, we should not expect it to disappear as a direct function of the satisfaction of their interests. For a movement organization—particularly in its formative phase—the functions of protest go beyond achieving the demands of supporters (Pizzorno 1978). Such groups often continue to protest long after their original claims have disappeared from the agenda, pursuing goals that would be irrational if the group's only aim were their realization.

This observation suggests another: although movements often use protest to gain advantage, advantage should not be seen in narrowly economic terms, but as instrumental to the broader interest a movement organization has in establishing itself, in maintaining its internal cohesion and external reputation, and in distinguishing itself from its enemies and competitors.[2] Protest, in other words, is an expressive symbol of the group's opposition to others or to authorities, and it will not end when demands have been accepted, ignored, or made irrelevant. Movement organizations continue to compete with each other for people's support with different forms of collective action in order to gain and hold on to a constituency.

Spontaneity and 'Old' Organizations

Although they are the most central actors in modern protest waves, social movement organizers do not monopolize collective action during cycles of protest. On the one hand, spontaneous forms of collective action are developed by ordinary people who use the organization of their everyday lives to air their grievances. On the other, especially when disorder is general, interest groups, political parties, and professional associations use protest to gain satisfaction for their members' demands and attract new supporters. Though such groups work within institutions during quieter times, in protest waves they compete with the movement organizations by adopting their tactics, albeit in more conventional form.

For instance, consider the university student movement that we shall analyse in Chapter 6. It developed in the mid-1960s within educational institutions, out of the protests by old student associations against educational reform. In its course, *ad hoc* assemblies and mass demonstrations developed, along with formal social movement organizations. If we were to measure the university students' movement only through the presence of the new movement organizations, we should miss the important role of both spontaneous mass mobilization and institutionalized groups alongside them. It is the interaction among mass mobilization, movement organizers, and traditional associations that produces a cycle of protest.

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[2] The risks of taking a narrowly economic view of participation are illustrated by Mancur Olson Jr., *The Logic of Collective Action* (1968). Olson emphasized the difficulty of stimulating participation in groups just as the Western world was erupting in an explosion of participation! See the trenchant critique in Hirschman (1982).

III TACTICAL INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVE MOBILIZATION

The inclusion of *ad hoc* assemblies, interest groups, and institutional groups within the social movement sector makes it clear that we shall be talking about a sector that is internally differentiated, non-autonomous from politics and institutions, and internally competitive. These three aspects of the movement sector will help us to explain the dynamics of the cycle. For the competition between movement organizers and established interest groups for people's support leads different groups to adopt different strategies of mobilization and forms of interaction with elites and authorities. While some adopt more radical forms in order to outflank their competitors, others will move towards institutional status where they can hope to provide both selective and collective incentives to supporters (Olson 1968).

During the upward curve of the cycle, as mass participation increases, there is creative experimentation and a testing of the limits of mass participation. As established groups, such as trade unions, parties and interest associations, enter the movement sector, they monopolize conventional mass forms of action, producing incentives for others to use more disruptive forms of mass action to outflank them. But as participation declines later in the cycle, the mass base for both moderate and confrontational mass actions begins to shrink. New groups who try to enter the movement sector can only gain space there by adopting more radical forms of action that do not depend on a mass base. Through this essentially political process, the social movement sector evolves, divides internally, incites repression and eventually declines. This differentiation, competition and radicalization of the social movement sector is the central process that gives the cycle a dynamic character. We shall return to this sketch in the conclusion to see how closely the main lines of the Italian cycle conform to it.

IV THE REPERTOIRE OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

The internal differentiation and competition within the social movement sector can best be seen through the evolution of the forms of collective action people use. Charles Tilly writes:

> At any point in time, the repertoire of collective actions available to a

> population is surprisingly limited. Surprisingly, given the innumerable ways in which people could, in principle, deploy their resources in pursuit of common ends. Surprisingly, given the many ways real groups have pursued their own common ends at one time or another. (1978: 151)

The repertoire of contention of a group Tilly defines as 'the whole set of means it has for making claims of different kinds on different individuals or groups' (1986A: 4). 'Because similar groups generally have similar repertoires', he continues, 'we can speak more loosely of a general repertoire that is available for contention to the population of a time and place'. The repertoire, Tilly argues, 'comes into use and changes as a function of fluctuations in interests, opportunity and organization'.[3]

Over the centuries, Tilly argues, the repertoire of contention has changed very slowly, for it is limited by the pace of structural change (e.g. capitalism, statebuilding) and constrained by cultural conventions about the legitimate forms of contention. The repertoire is part of a well-worn scenario of action that can lead to violence or arrest, but whose rules everybody knows. In Tilly's view, a particular form of collective action is not only what people *do* when engaged in conflict; it is also what a society has come to *expect* they will do among a culturally-sanctioned and limited set of options.[4]

But there is a major exception to the glacial pace with which the repertoire of contention evolves. Within protest cycles, new forms of collective action succeed one another with bewildering rapidity. People adopt new forms of action and combine them with old ones, expressive forms combine with instrumental ones, new actors come on to the scene, and older ones adapt their more successful forms of action. Cycles of protest are the crucibles within which the repertoire of collective action expands.[5]

Forms of collective action are not chosen randomly, but because they are the most efficacious means to achieve a particular goal, communicate a message, or attract members and allies, and outflank or defeat opponents. The forms that are used mainly depend on the resources and information available to the group, and not on what could theoretically achieve a stated goal. Some will use conventional strikes, petitions, or delegations; others will turn to public forms of demonstration like the march or public meeting; others will use more confrontational forms like occupations, forced entries, or obstruction; more rarely, people use violence to put forward their demands.

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[3] For a more detailed analysis of Tilly's concept of the repertoire, see my review (1987*b*).

[4] As Arthur L. Stinchcombe writes in his review of Tilly's *The Contentious French*, 'the elements of the repertoire are . . . simultaneously the skills of population members and the cultural forms of the population' (1987: 1248).

[5] I have argued this point in a recent paper, 'Between Moments of Madness and Ages of Contention' (1987*a*).

How does the parabola of disruption develop in the course of a cycle? Does it begin with dramatic and confrontational actions which eventually become institutionalized? With routine and conventional ones that are replaced by more radical tactics as people gain confidence or provide themselves with organization? Or with violence, destroying the deference that protects elites and institutions from rebellion? Is there a parabola in terms of disruptiveness as well as a rise and fall in the size of the social movement sector?

We shall see in Chapter 3 that, as the level of participation rises and falls, it also describes a curve from institutionalization to disruption and back again. Protest in Italy began with well-organized forms of collective action that rapidly gave way to an intensive peak of disruption and confrontation as new movements formed. Following this brief period, institutional groups entered the social movement sector and protest spread to within the polity, and collective action expanded mainly by conventional means. There was one major exception to this decline, as new entrants to the movement sector tried to outbid the old ones with ever more radical forms of action—the small group organized violence that itself helped to close the cycle.

V POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

What leads people to adopt disruptive forms of collective action? Structural changes in a society have usually been seen as the major producers of protest or mobilization potential (Barnes and Kaase 1979; Klandermans 1988). We shall see in the next chapter that such changes were central to laying the groundwork for protest in Italy. But on its own, structural change only creates the objective *potential* for movements and cannot overcome the personal inertia nor develop the networks and solidarities necessary to mount group action (Klandermans and Tarrow 1988).

In order to lead to social movements, protest potential must be translated into action. This can take organized form, as existing groups engage in 'consensus mobilization' or incite people to action

(Klandermans 1988); it can take spontaneous form, as protest grows out of conflicts within institutions; but it is primarily political opportunities that 'translate' protest potential into action.[6]

Which aspects of political opportunity structure can be connected to the potential for protest?[7]

First and most important is the extent to which formal political institutions are open or closed to participation by groups on the margins of the polity and the presence or absence of repression. Eisinger argues that protest is most likely 'in systems characterized by a mix of open and closed factors' (1973: 15). He found variations in political access in American city government that helped to explain the differences he found in people's willingness to protest.

The relative openness or closure of opportunities changes over time; for example, Snyder and Tilly, in their analysis of French strike waves, found that conflict increased as national elections approached (1972: 529). Hobsbawm showed that, in the history of land occupations in highland Peru, changes in national politics stimulated greater insurgency among the peasants (1974). We shall see that in Italy the openness of access changed during the course of the protest cycle, producing a greater institutionalization of demands.

A second aspect of opportunity structure is the stability of political alignments, as indicated, for example, by electoral instability. In both the 1930s and 1960s in the United States, changes in the parties' electoral strength led to changes in the strategy for bringing unrepresented social groups into the political system, most dramatically producing the pro-civil Rights policies of the Kennedy Administration, which was suffering the loss of the 'solid South' of segregationist white voters (Piven and Cloward 1977: ch. 4). The Democrats' attempt to seek new sources of support to compensate for its declining electorate not only encouraged changes in voting behaviour but broadened political mobilization in general.

[6] The concept of political opportunity structure has emerged from a sequence of research and theorizing in the United States: Lipsky's work (1968), Eisinger's work on urban movements (1973), Jenkins's and Perrow's research on California farm workers (1977), Piven and Cloward's magisterial book on four American movements in the 1930s and 1960s (1977), and Doug McAdam's masterful book on the civil rights movement (1982). I have tried to develop the concept further in my *Stuggling to Reform* (1983), an effort that owes much to Eisinger's formulation. For a parallel effort and an ingenious comparative operationalization, see Kitschelt (1985).

[7] For slightly different formulations of the concept of political opportunity structure from the one presented here, see McAdam, 'Micro-mobilization Contexts and Recruitment to Activism', in Klandermans, Kriesi, and Tarrow (eds.) (1988) and Kitschelt (1985).

Finally, political conflicts within and among elites are a third way in which unrepresented groups are encouraged to protest. The French Revolution provides a perfect illustration; the poor appear on the public stage only after deep cleavages have been revealed *within* the monarchy and after bourgeois groups have begun demanding more open access to power. This not only signalled the weakness of the establishment, but showed the poor that they had potential allies within the polity. 'Success', conclude Jenkins and Perrow in their study of California farm workers, 'comes when there is a combination of sustained outside support and disunity and/or tolerance on the part of political elites' (1977: 251).

Political opportunity structure provides groups with resources that increase the effectiveness of their protest—for example, a sympathetic press, or political parties seeking electoral advantage, or 'conscience constituents' (McCarthy and Zald 1977). It encourages unrepresented groups to protest in the belief that the costs of insurgency have been lowered—as when a sympathetic political party makes clear that it will not support repression. It can help the poor to detect where and how the system is most vulnerable, enabling them to overcome their habitual disunity and lack of information.

Although an open political opportunity structure helps to trigger a period of protest, that structure does not remain unchanged throughout it. On the one hand, the 'early risers'—if they are successful—provide models of action and evidence of elites' vulnerability that encourage new actors to enter the social movement sector and influence members of the polity to offer themselves as allies.[8] But on the other hand, protesters' success may trigger reactions whose effects close off political opportunities: counter-mobilization occurs, there is a backlash in public opinion, and the forces of order regroup as they adapt to new challenges. In some cases—as in Italy—an extreme right-wing movement develops which physically challenges the Left, radicalizing conflict and thus quickening the decline in mass participation.

VI FRAMES OF MEANING

Thus far, I have argued that a protest cycle is unified by a general disposition to use disruptive means of collective action, by the competition between groups for mass support, and by the expansion of the repertoire of contention to new groups through competition and tactical innovation. But something else unifies the movement sector: the interpretative themes that inspire people to collective action and frame their concrete grievances in terms that both dignify them and have meaning for other groups, allies and elites.

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[8] As Snow and his associates (1986) have observed, within each historical era there are typically 'one or two movements that colour the preoccupations and social change effected during the era'. See also Snow and Benford (1988) and Gamson (1988).

In collective action, as in politics in general, people cannot for long sustain campaigns on behalf of their rights of benefits without identifying them with general values and reaching out to others through a framework of common understandings. Some of these understandings are traditional; they come from the political culture itself. In the United States in the 1960s, for example, the notion of 'rights' derived its centrality from its traditional importance in American political culture—although it had often been honoured in the breach in the case of the black population.

A major feature of a protest cycle, as Snow and Benford argue, is that a few traditional interpretative frames are diffused throughout society and develop beyond their usual frame of meaning (1988). For example, in the United States in the 1960s, the notion of rights was extended from blacks to chicanos and native Americans, to gays and women, and even to the rights of animals. This extension of traditional interpretative frames is one of the main mechanisms for the diffusion of a protest cycle.

More rarely, inherited symbols are transformed into new ones, as when the civil rights movement's emphasis on rights gave birth to the notion of 'black power'. Black power advocates not only diffused the movement to population groups in the ghettos of the North that had not been involved in the earlier non-violent conflicts; they also radicalized it ideologically and employed violence. The result was that the extension of the civil rights movement to the North was accompanied by a rejection of non-violence and of white allies, as well as a more militant rhetoric.

Protest cycles also produce radically new interpretative frames that have no traditional recognition in the political culture. Such was the case when elements of the anti-Vietnam war movement in the United States rejected the symbols of patriotism—the American flag, the draft card—and adopted a species of Third World internationalism that was wholly foreign to the rest of the movement. The difficulty of imposing a new interpretative frame on a political culture was demonstrated by the widespread rejection of this strand of the anti-war movement in America and by public acceptance of its savage repression.

In Italy too we shall find empirical support for Snow and Benford's thesis that a protest cycle produces a few 'master' interpretative frames that spread from a few core sectors to the social movement sector as a whole. We shall see how one traditional theme, workerism, inherited from the traditional Left, rose and fell in the course of the cycle, while a new one, autonomy, had much greater fortune and left a heritage in the increasing secularization and declining party control over representation.

VII CYCLICAL DYNAMICS

We can now summarize the main conceptual elements that will be used to study a protest cycle:

First, the *repertoire of protest:* we hypothesize that a cycle will show an increasing and then declining magnitude in the use of disruptive direct action.

Second, *the social movement sector:* as the cycle proceeds, collective action is diffused to an increasingly broad spectrum of the public, only to shrink as demands are satisfied, repression takes hold and exhaustion sets in.

Third, *grievances and demands:* people organize around their common interests, which are broadened into new interpretative frames as the cycle proceeds, followed by their generalization and transformation into the 'common sense' of conventional politics.

Fourth, *social movement organizations:* though interest groups and *ad hoc* assemblies are important in generating protest, a major mechanism for its broadening and diffusion are social movement organizations, because, for them, protest is a resource.

Fifth, *political opportunities:* while structural conflicts produce mobilization potential, the latter is transformed into action by political opportunities, which expand as the cycle gathers force and contract as it declines.

Seen in this way, a protest cycle is an analogue to a business cycle: that is, a series of individual and group decisions made in the context of some general, though not uniformly experienced, systemic factors that both trigger the cycle and help to maintain it. In a protest cycle, as in a business cycle, the original factors that give rise to protest are 'structural', but they cannot explain all the actions that take place within it. Once the cycle begins, the actions of some groups trigger responses by 'late-comers', which may be independent of the structural factors that incited the 'early risers'.

For example, consider a depression. The general factors that initiate and prolong it are both structural (e.g. over-production, risk-inducing interest rates and margins) and situational (e.g. the 'climate for business'). The cycle begins when individuals and groups—often in response to a suddenly imposed grievance such as a crash—withdraw their confidence from the market. It is then diffused by reactions to the impact of these effects—by, for example, imitation (when bank scares begin) or by reaction (when these scares lead to mortgage foreclosures). It is completed when government and other influential groups take action to reverse the cycle, and people respond by returning to habitual economic behaviours or by devising new ones.

The dynamic of a protest cycle can be seen in a similar way to that of a business cycle, except that what carries a protest cycle forward are people's decisions to take disruptive collective action against elites, other groups, or authorities. Protest cycles are also like economic cycles in that organizational responses develop in reaction to an increase in people's demands. These groups may be new (social movement organizations) or old (existing interest organizations). They compete for people's support with different combinations of programmes and forms of action.

If it is an increase in demand that leads to the formation of new movement organizations and induces old ones to enter the social movement sector, what leads to the decline of the cycle? An answer cannot be offered in the abstract, but the elements that have been offered above provide a hint of an explanation. Just as it is popular mobilization that first inspired people to protest and caused movement organizations to form around their demands, it is *de*-mobilization—produced by exhaustion, repression, and reform—that leads to the end of the cycle. People retreat from disruptive collective action when their immediate demands are satisfied, when they become tired of the risks and costs, and when it becomes too dangerous to go out on the streets.

Why it becomes dangerous is the most controversial aspect of the cycle. In part, it is because the police become more aggressive as political pressure is put on them to put a stop to disorder. But it is also because movement organizations, in seeking to gain support through tactical competition, outbid and attack one another with violent means. Just as at the peak of a business cycle people will continue to invest and to form new companies even as demand declines, so at some stage in a protest cycle movement organizations continue to form as participation declines and more movement organizations are competing for the loyalty of fewer supporters. They do so by using ever more radical forms of collective action. The result is violence, which leads many people to desert movement activity and, hence, to the close of the cycle.

VIII METHODS AND OBJECTS

The strategy of the research was to study empirically the actions of protesters and their interactions with others and with authorities over time in order to see to what extent the magnitude and the forms of social and political conflict observed fit this model of participation, movement organization, competition, violence, and decline. How to do so is another matter.

In the late 1960s, a number of systematic studies of collective action were stimulated in the United States by the Vietnam years and by the violence in the black ghettos. Their authors used multivariate statistical tools to analyse patterns of collective behaviour across nations and between cities. These studies ceased soon after the end of the 'troubles', in part because society had had enough of disorder but also because most of the research focused on violence, using government statistics that measured little else. These studies gave little attention to the majority of non-violent protests, or to which groups were protesting and on behalf of what, and gave none at all to the processes of mobilization and demobilization. A sharper and deeper image of protest was produced by the qualitative case studies of Piven and Cloward (1977).

Two important exceptions were the long-term historical reconstruction of American social conflict by William Gamson (1975) and the work of Charles Tilly and his collabourators on France and England.[9] Both developed a broad conception of collective action in which violence was a variable and people's interests were central; around the study of 'challenging groups', in Gamson's case, and that of 'contention' in Tilly's lexicon. Through analysis of newspaper and documentary sources, both were able to relate accounts of collective action to the reactions of elites, opponents and allied groups over time.

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[9] I wish to record here my debt to Tilly, whose contribution to this book has been personal as well as professional. Of his many contributions to the theory and analysis of collective action, the most central are probably his work on the Vendée (1964), his commentary on the contribution of the study of European collective action to the study of American violence (1969), his analysis, with Edward Shorter, of French strikes (Shorter and Tilly 1974), the theoretical framework he has developed for the study of collective action (1978), and his recent reconstruction of the history of French collective action (1986*a*). His work on Britain is still in progress; see Tilly (1975, 1986*b*; 1987*a* and *b*).

Using newspaper sources, like Tilly, I shall study both qualitative and quantitative aspects of a large number of protest events over time. But rather than studying all forms of contention, I shall focus on the narrower category of protest.[10] Like Gamson, I shall focus on the outcomes of protest, but in the context of a much shorter historical period.[11] The newspaper data will be complemented with information from conventional histories, documentary sources and personal interviews on selected movements.

There is a good deal that studying protest in this way cannot show. On the one hand, it can only permit inference at a distance about the ideologies and deeply felt goals of leaders and followers. Nor can it analyse actions that take place in private, without public attention, although their disruptive effect over the long run may be great.[12] Nor can it penetrate the strategic calculations, the intergroup processes or the structures of social movement organizations or networks. Melucci has criticized this methodology on the grounds that 'what is observed [using such techniques] is in fact the *product* of the relations and meanings that constitute the structure of the action. The event of protest is the objectified result . . . of a texture of meanings and relationships, of a constructive process which is the basis of the action' (1988).

Such objections should serve as important cautions, but they should not be overstated. One may agree with Melucci without concluding, as he does, that the 'objectified result' of the construction of a social movement is unimportant or unrelated to its 'subjective' relations and meanings. The 'objectified result' is important, first of all, because it may lead to outcomes that either satisfy or disillusion people with collective action. Second, it is important because it is visible, not only to the observer, but, more important, to the elites, opponents, and potential supporters who make decisions and take actions about the movement.

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[10] Tilly criticizes the concept of protest for being too politically restricted, preferring the broader one of 'contention', by which he means all contentious collective action (1986*a*: ch. 1).

[11] Gamson has been criticized for regarding the more than 100 years of American conflict as a unified sampling frame and for not dealing with specific periods of political crisis. The principal criticism was offered by Goldstone (1980); for Gamson's response, see Gamson (1980).

[12] One thinks, for example, of the women's movement, for which 'the personal is political'. I have not discovered how to analyse 'personal' forms of protest systematically.

Consider the example of the widely diffused street violence that occurred at the end of the Italian cycle. It may have been only the 'objectified result' of deeper trends in Italian society. But its extensive coverage in the press was *politically* important in helping to create a climate of insecurity that justified represssion and led many who had been involved in the earlier period of mass protest to withdraw. The 'objectified result' had a 'subjective' impact that helped bring the cycle to a close, as I shall demonstrate in Chapter 12.

The task of studying social movements through the public record of their actions is difficult, but not impossible, if only because both movement organizations and ideologies can be detected in the actions of individuals acting collectively on behalf of their interests. We shall identify the actors through reports on their actions and demands; by using complementary sources, we can both identify the organizations involved and learn something about their relations. And by relating protest events to one another over space and time, we can suggest their underlying dynamic and how they relate to both structural and situational factors.

Since it is publicly observable collective action that interests us, the public newspaper record is almost an obligatory source of data. For sceptics, this may conjure up nightmares of the mindless counting of meaningless pieces of information. Readers will have to decide for themselves whether this is what they will find here, but it may be useful to point out that the content analysis of newspaper records has gone far beyond its origins in counting the numbers of strikes, riots, and demonstrations. We have used new techniques of interactive data entry and retrieval that makes it possible to use the computer, not only for quantitative, but also for textual analysis.[13]

An example of how this technology was used to provide a rich, narrative, and yet analytical picture of religious protest will be found

[13] For a description of how Tilly has used interactive data entry and retrieval in this way, see Schweitzer and Simmons (1981) and Tilly (1987*a* and *b*). For the procedures used in entering and editing the data in this study, see Appendices A and B. For more detailed information, see Social Protest and Policy Innovation Study, *Project Manuals*, Ithaca, NY, available from the author upon request. For a careful assessment of the risks and advantages of using newspaper-based event files, see Franzosi (1987*a* and *b*).

in Appendix B, which describes how the information for Chapter 8 was put together. The basic technique involves recording narrative descriptions alongside more conventional numerical records in the computer files and using the numerical records to retrieve subgroups of textual records for analysis. In an additional permutation, the textual information could be numerically coded and returned to the machine-readable files for statistical analysis. In this way, the analyst is not obliged to definitively pre-code and pre-digest qualitative information before learning enough about it to analyse it with whatever insight he or she possesses.

In this study, the newspaper data come primarily from Italy's main national newspaper of record at the time, the *Corriere della Sera*, from 1 January 1966 to 31 December 1973. Detailed information on 4,980 protest events of all kinds was so recorded. Italian critics may worry that the *Corriere* is an arm of the establishment. Although the criticism is partially just, it is actually an explanation of the newspaper's utility; for since we posit that the responses of elites and authorities to protest are conditioned by previous protests, what better instrument could we want than the newspaper that they read?

This does not mean that the *Corriere della Sera* will provide a perfect record of collective action. Many protests were missed and the significance of others distorted. In particular, we cannot expect from it a fair rendering of 'who attacked whom' in the frequent clashes between protesters and the police, and we will not attempt to do so. The *Corriere* was chosen as our main newspaper source for four reasons. First, it is the oldest independent national newspaper in the country and has the ambition of being a newspaper of record. Second, though politically moderate, it was controlled by no single party or movement. Third, because it is published in Milan it was close to the heartland of both industrial and general social protest. Fourth, because it is read by northern Italian business circles it contains a good deal of news on industrial conflict.

More detail on the strengths and weaknesses of Italian newspapers and of the *Corriere* in particular as sources will be found in Appendix B. Appendix A reproduces the protocols that were used to gather and record information. A number of tests, carried out both by others and myself, convince me that—despite the well-known risks of relying on newspaper reports of protest—the *Corriere* holds up quite well as long as our emphasis is on what happened, rather than on either the background of the news or its long-term consequences.[14]

Others are now in the process of carrying out more methodologically sophisticated analyses of the Italian press to study collective action, strikes, and protest.[15] My intention is to use the daily press, not as an exhaustive record of all that happened, but as a general framework in which to analyse the forms of collective action, the movements that emerged from them, and the leaders who used them to organize people and achieve their goals.

The newspaper record is the starting point for this analysis, rather than its boundary. In the course of the study, it will be combined with movement documents, statistical records, and the results of interviews with observers and former participants. These will show how the cycle of protest developed out of ordinary people's grievances and how—through a process of internal differentiation, competition, and alliances—they returned there. The democratic class struggle produced a major period of disorder and conflict. At its end, disorder contributed to an expansion of democracy. That is the central thesis of this book.

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[14] In a verbal communication to the author, Alessandro Silj observed that, in a test he carried out on four major national newspapers, over 90% of the violent events covered in any of them were also covered in the *Corriere*. I am grateful to Silj for this information.

[15] Relevant works, in addition to those of Tilly, cited in the bibliography, are by Roberto Franzosi, who has in progress a detailed reconstruction of the strike waves of the postwar period in Italy from newspaper sources. For descriptions of his methodology, see Franzosi (1987*a* and *b*).

Part One

PARABOLAS OF PROTEST

2

THE SOURCES OF PROTEST

New Year's Day in Livorno

Saturday, 31 December 1966. A quiet New Year's Eve in the old port city of Livorno. It has been quiet politically, too. At Christmastime, the local government sets up twinkling lights across the narrow old streets while the youth federations of the PCI (Communist Party) and PSI (Socialist Party), the FGCI and FGS, organize a peaceful demonstration in solidarity with the people of Vietnam.

On New Year's Eve, local young people, out of school and out of spirits in the December gloom, wander aimlessly around the old city. In the harbour, the American aircraft carrier *Independence* glides slowly out of the mist with several thousand sailors on board. To greet them, there are only a few tattered posters left from the parties' demonstration. 'Red Livorno greets you with the same disdain with which the Vietnamese people greet your bombs', they read (*Il Telegrafo*, 2 Jan. 1967).

Sunday, 1 January. A very different youth demonstration is organized to greet the New Year and welcome the *Independence*. For over two hours, a long line of students, workers, and other people threads through the streets of the old town, carrying banners calling for the end of American intervention in Vietnam. This is no party demonstration, but at a meeting in Piazza Grande, militants of the Communist and Socialist youth federations mix with Maoists and curiosity-seekers. From loudspeakers come attacks upon unnamed 'revisionists' who have failed to condemn American imperialism with sufficient vigour. This is the period when the Chinese communists were attacking the Soviet Union through the proxy of the PCI.

In high spirits, a group of students hang a straw-filled effigy of a GI from a tram wire in Piazza Grande: a sign hanging from it reads, 'Enough killing, Joe!' The fire brigade, arriving to take down the dummy, is greeted by a chorus of catcalls from the assembled students. The crowd remains friendly until a police 'panther' arrives. Suddenly, and for no apparent reason, three policemen with billy clubs descend and—according to *L'Unità*, the PCI's organ—'begin to swing at everyone within reach' (3 Jan.). The students lead them a chase down the Via Grande (*Corriere*, 2 Jan.) and lose them in the warren of streets around the old port.

Meanwhile, a group of American sailors on liberty is hemmed into a bar when some of the students notice them and begin to chant at the bar's entrance. The owner pulls down his shutters, to the kicks and curses of the students. Not far away, a navy jeep is surrounded, shaken from side to side, and its antenna bent off. A squad of carabinieri, mainly tough young southerners with little sympathy for the students, wades into the crowd to liberate the sailors from the jeep. Three policemen are reported wounded and one demonstrator, a worker, is booked before the crowd disperses (*Corriere*, 2 Jan.; *Telegrafo*, 2 Jan.).

Monday, 2 January: The Livornesi awaken to find their city covered with handbills encouraging 'citizens, workers, and young people to continue to demonstrate without truce against American imperialism'. The handbills are signed, mysteriously, 'Militants of the PCI, the PSIUP (the left-wing Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity) and independent supporters on the Livorno Committee against American Aggression in Vietnam'. No one has heard of the latter, but it sounds like a creation of the Maoists.

Who are the militants of the PCI and PSIUP who have joined the 'Chinese' in their demonstration? The answer remains unclear, since neither party admits to having organized it. Indeed, the handbills take aim at unnamed 'revisionists who organize peaceful demonstrations with the approval of the police'—an obvious sideswipe at the PCI (*Telegrafo*, 3 Jan.). Can it be that the Communist party is suffering from internal disarray?

The PCI wastes no time in reacting. Though approving the efforts of 'young democrats' to fight imperialism, the party denies responsibility for the handbills and reminds its readers of the demonstrations of its own youth branch the week before. The crude and inflammatory leaflets, the party secretary writes, are 'contrary to our spirit' (*L'Unità*, 3 Jan.). The PSIUP secretary brags that '*our* protests are carried out with respect for the law and in the light of day' (*Telegrafo*, 3 Jan.).

The official Left is confused, angry, and embarrassed. The bourgeois press seizes on its discomfiture; the *Telegrafo* claims it has learned that the PCI is deeply worried that the Maoists will infiltrate and radicalize its own demonstrations. The presence of the

'Chinese', the party complains, will make every initiative 'a shot in the dark' (4 Jan.). The PCI secretary is forced to state that he did not oppose the demonstration—only the leaflets. Several PCI branches are rumoured to have begun a campaign to support the New Year's demonstrators (7 Jan.).

The party youth federation now issues a statement which *L'Unità* fails to publish, criticizing its party's leaders for having come so late to supporting the demonstration for peace (13 Jan.). The New Left gleefully accuses the PCI of 'pouring water on the fire' of revolution (*Nuova Unità*, 5 Jan.) At the nearby University of Pisa (where many young Livornesi go to school), the episode does not go unnoticed by militant groups to the left of the Communist Party.

What can this unimportant incident in a port city along the Tuscan coast in early 1967 tell us about the sources of mass mobilization in Italy in the 1960s?

First, it illustrates the international origins of the protest wave that is about to rise. Though the incident in Livorno was pungent, provincial, and reflected Italian political culture, it also shows that Italy's protest wave was rooted in an international cycle of protest and in the changing international system in general.

Second, while the agents of disruption were primarily new (students and Maoists), domestic political opportunities were visible behind the headlines. In fact, as we shall see, it was the cleavages within the Left that gave the students the incentive to protest.

Third, the story shows how disorderly politics began with insurgency within and against familiar institutions. The Communists put the issue of Vietnam on the agenda and organized a peaceful demonstration against it; this provided the radicals with opportunities for mobilization.

Fourth, the initial forms of action are both conventional and imaginative; violence only develops in the interaction between enthusiastic students and police who are ill-prepared for mass politics.

There will be two main themes in this chapter: first, that the Italian protest wave did not emerge like Venus out of the sea, but grew out of Italy's postwar political settlement and its inherent contradictions; second, that the issues that propelled the new movements on to the public stage were outgrowths of domestic political cleavages and of issues placed on the political agenda by institutional groups and parties.

I THE POSTWAR POLITICAL SETTLEMENT

The three major characteristics of the postwar settlement in Italy are usually seen as the reproduction within its domestic politics of the international Cold War, a domestic cleavage structure that pitted a Communist-led working class against a Christian Democratic-led conservative bloc, and weak and inefficient political institutions. Each of these is true enough as a starting point, but each will need to be elaborated and somewhat modified if we are to understand how a largely middle-class movement—the university students' movement—could trigger a national wave of disorder in the late 1960s.[1]

The International Settlement

Italy entered the postwar world with the influence of the United States guaranteed internally by its major ally, the DC (Christian Democracy), but with a strong presence of the Soviet Union through the Communists and the CGIL (General Confederation of Italian Labour) that they controlled with their Socialist ally. This presence of both victorious wartime allies reproduced international tensions within the political system and helped to consolidate the party system around its Communist and Christian Democratic poles.

International polarization soon became more important for the party strategies it permitted than for the direct interference of the superpowers in domestic politics.[2] In the short and medium term, it was American domination and Russian threat that dominated debate. But in the long run, the symbiotic duopoly of the two major parties—each associated with minor allies—was what would really shape the postwar system. Though incidents of American pressure were many in the late 1940s, they became increasingly rare during the 1950s and were soon secondary to the main function of anticommunism, which was to allow the construction of a political-economic settlement based on Christian Democratic power and capitalist reconstruction.

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[1] The interpretation offered in this chapter is a synthesis of a number of my previous papers and articles that, for the sake of economy, I will cite here and then draw upon without further citation. The major sources are *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy* (1967); the concluding chapter to Blackmer and Tarrow (eds.), *Communism in Italy and France* (1975); 'The Italian Party System between Crisis and Transition' (1977*b*); the introduction to Graziano and Tarrow, (eds.), *La crisi italiana* (1979); the conclusion to Lange and Tarrow (eds.), *Italy in Transition: Crisis and Consensus* (1980); 'Three Years of Italian Democracy', in Howard Penniman (ed.), *Italy at the Polls, 1979: A Study of the Parliamentary Elections* (1982); and 'The Crisis of the Late 1960s and the Transition to Mature Capitalism', in Arrighi (ed.), *Semiperipheral Development; The Political Economy of Southern Europe in the Twentieth Century* (1985).

[2] I owe this observation to Gianfranco Pasquino, whose analyses of the impact of the postwar settlement upon the shape of the future political system are among the most sensitive; see Pasquino (1980, 1986).

The political benefits that this system gave the DC are obvious; but just as important were the gains to Italy's newly-liberated economic managers, for whom the cold war helped to guarantee low wages and iron control of the workplace in a period of widespread under-employment and rural exodus. The exclusion of the working class and its political representatives from political power in 1947 reinforced this model, based on production at low wages at intermediate levels of technology for the world market.

American hegemony was a double-edged sword. While it conspired to exclude the PCI and to isolate its union component within the factories, it also constrained the DC to govern through essentially democratic practices. Thus the system was not only *born* a republic; unlike other creations of the postwar settlement, it stayed that way, in no small measure because most DC leaders and their American sponsors would not have tolerated an authoritarian inversion. This helped willy-nilly to re-socialize a generation that had grown up under Fascism into the novel idea that you defeated your enemy—not with clubs and castor oil—but at the ballot box. And it allowed the Left to survive at the local and trade union levels to fight again another day.

As for the Communists, since they were out of power they were less constrained by their international ties than the DC. (As Party Secretary Berlinguer was later to quip, the PCI had the luxury of living outside the protective realm of proletarian internationalism.) But even here, the constraints were real, because the Soviet Union preserved a considerable amount of control over the PCI's internal policies until late in the 1950s and also because a generation of exploited workers and ex-Resistance fighters would not have supported a party that cast aside the heritage of the victors of Stalingrad. The competition of a Socialist Party which still claimed to carry the banner of Marx also limited the PCI's freedom of movement.

Domestic Alignments

As a result of the internalization of these international cleavages, the political balance was frozen for a generation in approximately the form in which it had emerged from the war. While the Socialists lost their early leadership of the Left to the PCI and an extreme Right soon reappeared, the Left and moderate Right retained their share of the vote between 1948 and 1963. Each consolidated around itself a closely-woven network of party and mass organizations to enclose supporters and accommodate their needs. Their relationship was truly symbiotic; neither could risk a major strategic change without provoking a competing move by the other.

The degree to which the party subcultures actually enjoyed the active participation of their supporters should not be exaggerated. Both on the left and in the DC, partisan involvement became a flexible and more or less open affair. Even in the PCI—by far the most rigid mass party in the system—it soon became obvious that party cells were no longer working and that many members failed to carry out even the most elementary tasks. As for the DC, its length of time in power led many to affiliate for reasons that had more to do with personal advantage than with political faith.

Though party conflict was intense, polarization was limited by the interclass strategies of the two major parties. The DC had always had a populist orientation deriving from Catholic social doctrine and the heritage of anti-fascism. To this was added De Gasperi's shrewd monopolization of the political centre, which avoided isolating his party into an integralist or right-wing ghetto. As for the PCI, its strong rural base, its relative weakness in the Industrial Triangle, and its ambition to organize the South and the middle class led to a strategy of alliances which was eventually to result in Togliatti's 'Italian Road to Socialism'.

The competition between the DC and the PCI was never a raw conflict between capitalists and workers. Had it been so, a strong lay centre would have developed and political change facilitated. But just as the CISL (The DC-led Confederation of Workers' Unions) and ACLI (the Catholic Workers' Association) organized hundreds of thousands of industrial workers, there were thousands of peasants, artisans, and middle strata to balance the tough old Resistance workers in the PCI. The interclass nature of both Marxist and Catholic subcultures left them open to a variety of forms of militance and quickly eroded the civil war atmosphere of the early Cold War.

The evolution of this loose and open partisanship—so frequently castigated by both Catholic integralists and Marxist purists—had an important function for the character of political exchange. In a political system in which reconciliation was blocked at the summit, negotiation could still take place at the base of the system, not only within the two main subcultures but, increasingly, between them. During the 1960s, for example, it became clear that parliamentary *leggine* (e.g. bills passed in committee), were passing with votes that approached unanimity. Where the patronage of the political system was distributed, Marxist Left and Catholic Centre-Right were learning to work together.

The costs of the symbiosis between the two monoliths took longer to become apparent. The DC, despite attempted challenges from the Liberal PLI under Malagodi, was clearly the main party of business, but business had to share government largesse with other groups in the DC's constituency. Similarly, although the PCI was the main workers' party, its rural base and its increasing attempts to woo the middle class put radicals in some doubt as to the durability of its commitment to the working class. Although neither the DC nor the PCI ever became a 'catch-all' party, in the jargon of the 1960s (Kirschheimer 1966), both were trying to 'catch more' support than in the past, and to some extent from among the same electorate. The longrun effect of this competition for the political centre was to moderate their competition.

The two main parties did possess an important kind of monopoly, a monopoly over mobilization. Outside the party system, representation was stifled and it was increasingly difficult for new issues or groups to gain a hearing. Even much of the press was party controlled or party-influenced, and many associations—for example, farmers and Catholic Action—gained their benefits through a family relationship (*parentela*) with their party sponsors (LaPalombara 1964). This monopoly of representation by the party system meant that new social or political actors had great difficulty getting their issues on to the political agenda. The last major episode of disorderly mass politics to gain attention before 1960 was the movement of landless peasants in the South in the late 1940s (Tarrow 1967). Even this movement was soon taken over by the PCI, which tried to form a front with middle-class landholders, and by the DC, which created agrarian reform agencies to co-opt its leaders.

The Institutional Framework

Postwar Italy was born a democracy. But like the early French Third Republic, its constitution was not the system most Italians would have preferred, but the one that divided them least. Even many of its most salient characteristics—a weak executive, a constitutional court—were not really preferences of the electorate but reactions against the last regime or imitations of the practices of foreign friends. The most innovative characteristics—such as the creation of regional governments—were put on the shelf for years, while many laws from the Fascist era were never taken off the books.

Installing a weak executive is a prudent practice in a country just beginning life as a democracy, but it was fear of authoritarianism that constrained Parliament from providing the Prime Minister with effective power, and not a devotion to the balance of power. What suffered most was decisional capacity. Governments changed frequently, and ministers seldom remained in power for long enough to see their policies through. Public authorities could not keep track of—let alone direct—the changes that were rapidly transforming the economy. And the Fascist-era bureaucracy was never reformed, nor did its higher civil servants retire until the 1970s.

The second effect of a weak executive was to consolidate the power of the parties over policy and politics. Cabinets were almost invariably coalitions of parties, factions, and notables. Parliamentary groups controlled the agenda of Parliament and made and unmade prime ministers. Governmental crises could only be resolved by long and elaborate negotiation between President and party leaders and among the latter. Although the society was bursting with energy and developing in a variety of directions, the institutional framework impeded the expression of demands and the airing of issues outside the party system.

In the context of Catholic centrist-populism, weak decisional capacity, and a Left that was too strong to be ignored but was excluded from power, the only kind of policies on which governments could agree and which did not require detailed implementation were distributional—in simple terms, policies of patronage. And since the DC lacked the strength to govern on its own after the earliest years of the Cold War, governments were formed and maintained as coalitions for patronage (Shefter 1977). These coalitions had the virtue of easy entry, but they left longterm policy decisions to the market.

But the DC was never *only* a party of patronage; it was also a party of devout Catholics—which explains why for so long it was not held accountable for its actions—and it remained a party of defence against Communism—which explains its American allies' unending tolerance for its failings. But both religious values and anti-communism became increasingly weak political reeds as Italian society became more secular, as the Red Menace retreated, and as voters became restless with the rhetoric of 1948. Despite its spiritual and ideological ties, the DC needed to construct governing coalitions against opponents who were both skilled and determined, and this need made patronage the common denominator of its relations with allies and supporters.

Patronage policies lent a flexibility to the system which belied its ideological polarization. But it also left the country without the capacity for programmatic planning that it would need when—as occurred from the early 1960s on—the infrastructural needs of an advanced capitalist society began to be serious. One does not need to moralize against patronage to grasp its potential dangers. In a country undergoing rapid social change, regulative, redistributive and constitutive decisions would sooner or later have to be made (Lowi 1971). Some—such as tax reform, decisions on social issues like divorce or abortion, and the reform of industrial relations—were only made when the insistent pressure of popular protest forced them on to the public agenda.

II ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Postwar Italy was from the first deeply involved in a dense web of international trading and capital networks. Facing a weak and politically divided working class, its economic managers had the advantage of paying low wages and offering competitive prices, practices that made it possible to take advantage of the vast expansion of trade between industrial economies that characterized the 1950s and 1960s (Shonfield 1965). Even in the doldrums of the mid-1960s, the economy was able to count on the stimulus of strong international demand (Salvati 1975).

But the Italian growth model was based not only on an expanding international market but on an explosion of entrepreneurship that greeted the end of corporatism, on the rapid mobilization of large reserves of cheap rural labour, and on substantial inputs of state aid to business. The result was a dramatic leap in economic growth which transformed the country's social landscape. As a Bank of Italy President, Guido Carli, was later to write:

In the twelve years between 1949 and 1960, GNP almost doubled in real terms; the rate of increase in real terms was 5.8 per cent, while the increase in prices was about 3 per cent. . . . Between 1951 and 1960, non-farm employment increased by 2.8 million, drawn from new sources of employment, from the unemployed and from the reduction of farm labour. (*Corriere*, 24 Jan. 1986)

The Growth Model and Politics

Carli was right; the period from the late 1940s to about 1962 was one of unprecedented prosperity and unrestrained entrepreneurship. But this prosperity was also based on high rates of domestic labour exploitation made possible by reservoirs of cheap labour and by the weakness of and divisions between the trade unions. Even at the height of the economic 'miracle', there remained significant vestiges of backwardness in both industry and agriculture, as well as a small internal market that left the economy susceptible to recession at every international downturn, a great potential for unemployment should production costs increase, and a social infrastructure that was inadequate to the growth of industry. In the halcyon days of the economic miracle, few people noticed, but in retrospect, it is clear that the miracle had feet of clay.

In so far as the state was called upon to intervene in the economy, it did so by providing interest-free export loans, constraining demand whenever overheating (that is, a general rise in wages) occurred, and supporting the rapidly growing public sector. But once used in this facilitative way, the tools of economic management were rapidly set aside, while complementary tools—increasing employment, supporting domestic demand, or addressing structural problems—were never employed (Salvati 1975). The central role in managing the economy fell to the Bank of Italy, which was guided by a mentality of neo-liberalism before the term was invented.

Despite these weaknesses, the postwar political economy was a species of the mixed capitalism that flourished throughout Western Europe until the late 1960s. The South was more backward than other regions, but the dualism that this disparity created did not set Italy off from other southern European countries. The role of government was greater than other countries' in some ways, but it was weaker in others (for example, in industrial policy). And if class conflict between management and labour was theoretically great (in how many capitalist countries was the strongest union in the country controlled by a coalition of Communists and Socialists?), in practice the unions were weak and divided. With no effective union presence in the factories, and with organized labour divided along political lines, management was in the driver's seat in both collective bargaining and in the political marketplace.

But this was not a classical liberal economy, nor even the kind of government-enforced market economy we have come to know in the Reagan–Thatcher era. For if business had ready access to influence, the governing party was a machine fed by a variety of other social clients whose votes were essential to its continued political dominance. Moreover, the government lacked the effective policy instruments to advance business interests. Industrialists enjoyed free range for exploiting opportunities for economic expansion not because of—but despite—the state's role in the economy. Italy's was a liberal economy by default.

The Social Coalition

The social regime of the postwar settlement in many ways represented a pendant to that of its predecessor. Business was urged to free itself from the corporatist constraints under which it had operated for twenty years, and was given the fiscal and monetary framework in which to do so. But the DC—despite its Catholic populism and its willingness to use the state as a reservoir of patronage—was never entirely trusted by business, a class that was far more comfortable with the fiscal integrity and anti-statism of the Liberals. The DC facilitated business success in many ways; but it never became the class party of business.

Business distrust of the the DC does not imply that the working class had a solid base in the governing party. Despite DC professions of devotion to the world of work and the advantages it offered the CISL in the state-run sector, the party rejected the notion of representing the workers as a class. Whenever wage inflation threatened—as it did in the early 1960s—a freezing dose of monetary and fiscal constraint was applied to cool off the economy. And until the late 1960s, when it was forced to do so, the governing party failed to institute a modern industrial relations system.

The exclusion of the workers was less a matter of social policy or ideology than of politics and political economics. The DC's American connection, the divisions within organized labour, and a domestic political game that was based on the isolation of the PCI meant that working-class representation *had* to be politically limited and that managerial power would hold in the factory, where repression, immigration, and lay-offs were dominant modes of labour control.

The DC had ideological and electoral commitments to other groups. For example, because of their privileged position in Catholic social ideology and electoral calculations, the peasants gained protection and unheard-of access to credit, social insurance, and more secure title to the land. After the brief and explosive land occupations of the late 1940s, they were dosed with patronage into political silence (far more so than in France, for example). This was a remarkable development in a country that had known rural class warfare as recently as 1919–22.

For much the same reason, the independent middle strata of city and province were politically favoured, in part through a tax system that failed to tap their incomes, but more basically because they were most advantageously placed to prosper from the climate of 'individualistic mobilization' that marked the postwar atmosphere (Pizzorno 1964). Shopkeepers, small businessmen, and artisans who were favoured by law and policy formed the core of the provincial voting strength of the DC.

Thus the governing party organized an interclass coalition based on patronage, religion, and anti-communism whose roots were deepest among the peasants and the independent middle class and shallowest among the workers. Although it officiated over the greatest economic expansion in the country's history and helped to keep labour weak and divided, the DC was never really trusted by business. This distrust was proved well-founded as the DC's electoral strength declined and it responded by adding new political allies to government.

Why did the DC need new political allies? Apart from the decline of religiosity and the declining appeal of anti-communism, a growing social group was marginal to its array of political supporters—the educated middle strata of the cities. According to estimates made by Sylos-Labini (1975: 156), the employed *petite bourgeoisie* increased from ten to seventeen per cent of the population between 1951 and 1971, an increase that corresponded closely to a simultaneous decline of the traditional middle class. The country's transformation to an industrial economy was producing a major new population group, mainly in the cities of the North.

This new middle class was not only the most rapidly growing social group produced by the economic miracle: it was also potentially the greatest threat to the DC's continued political dominance. First, it was physically replacing the independent middle class and peasants who were the governing party's most reliable postwar base. Second, it was an articulate and educated class with professional ambitions that produced a set of demands going beyond those of its predecessors—demands for civic modernization, educational reform, urban planning. It produced something else as well: a postwar boom of children, many of whom would crowd into institutions of higher education in the 1960s. We met some of them at the beginning of this chapter; they would unleash the cycle of protest of 1965–75.

It is sometimes thought that the dramatic increases in university enrolment that Italy experienced in the postwar period (there were reportedly twice as many college students in 1968 as in 1951) created a 'mass' university. But the expansion of education in the 1950s and 1960s really favoured the middle strata and not the workers (Martinotti 1969: ch. 2). These offspring entered a system of higher education whose structure had not basically changed since the beginning of the century and which took in far more students than it could effectively educate. The student protests of the late 1960s would originate primarily in the new sectors of the middle class.

One other group occupied an equivocal position in the DC's social coalition, the immigrants. Between 1951 and 1971, even as the birthrate was declining, the large cities of the North nearly doubled in population. This increase was largely the result of the mass migration of Southerners and of peasants to the cities. Most of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers taken on by northern factories in the 1950s and 1960s were immigrants, lacking both a tradition of industrial discipline and a tie to the trade unions.

Many of these new workers came from Catholic backgrounds, and their vestigial ties to the Church might have fostered new Christian Democratic strength in the working-class periphery of the northern cities. But the lack of urban services—even decent housing—to welcome them, the low salaries and poor working conditions that many of them found, and the discrimination they encountered from Northerners—added to the organizational weakness of the DC—guaranteed that this would not occur. Some of the most militant workers in the protest wave were recent rural migrants from the Catholic Veneto. We shall meet some of them in Venice's industrial zone in Chapter 7.

Thus while the country's economic growth both helped to maintain, and was facilitated by the postwar political settlement, both the boom and the political settlement contained the seeds within it to undermine that system. By the mid-sixties, the cheap labour supply on which the economy's export-led growth had been based was drying up. The working class, particularly immigrant unskilled and semi-skilled workers, was gaining resources and greater political unity. And the new middle class in the cities was growing weary of a party system that monopolized participation and was governed by the narrow logic of a coalition for patronage which benefited other groups. These strains were already apparent at the beginning of the 1960s as the DC searched for ways to shore up its shrinking hold on power.

III TRANSPARENT CONFLICT AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY

There is a large and remarkably inconclusive literature on the social, economic, and political causes of revolutions, collective violence, riots, protest movements, and coups.[3] The traditional explanation for the rise of social movements—that they are simply the result of deprivation—has been found to be remarkably unsatisfactory (McCarthy and Zald 1973; Oberschall 1973). This is especially true when we turn to cycles of protest, for they are just as likely to arise during periods of prosperity, like the 1960s, and to involve relatively affluent groups, like college students, as they are to appear during periods of economic downturn and among the poor (Piven and Cloward 1977).

Since periods of prosperity and periods of crisis alike produce cycles of protest, it seems logical to expect that the factors responsible for generating protest can be present in both, although they are obviously not going to be equally present in all periods of history. People are most available for collective action, I shall argue, when social conflict is transparent and political opportunities are expanding.

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[3] Some scholars have studied the reasons why individuals choose to associate with existing movements (Klandermans 1984; McAdam 1986); others look at the factors that induce political entrepreneurs to create new movement organizations (McCarthy and Zald 1973); while yet others look at the societal factors that lead to the appearance of collective action in general (Graham and Gurr 1969; Hibbs 1973). For an excellent literature review and synthesis, see the contributions in Gurr (ed.) (1980).

By the awkward term 'transparency of conflict', I mean the simplification and increased visibility of social conflict and corresponding attachability of people's particular grievances to general issues.[4] By 'expanding political opportunities', I mean that people are receiving signals that issues that concern them are at stake and that they can hope to influence their outcome without suffering undue cost or repression.

Under what conditions will social conflict become transparent in democratic capitalism, which by its very nature produces mechanisms for its sublimation and justification? A variety of circumstances can make social conflict transparent, but it is most likely to erupt in periods in which the justifying culture of such societies is weakest: that is, when major transitions to new productive processes, international divisions of labour and internal power relations occur. These produce new occupational strata and undermine old ones. In such periods, new social networks develop with alternative solidarities, and literacy and communication expand people's information about others' situations.

Political opportunities expand rapidly in such periods, as the position of well-entrenched groups is threatened by technological change; as new groups appear whose importance is not yet recognized in access to power or services; and as both kinds of groups turn to the state for support just as the latter faces increased financial burdens. The temporary shifts in social power which occur in such periods produce political opportunities for outsiders to gain greater leverage.[5] People go into the streets when they feel their grievances are attachable to general axes of conflict and when opportunities present themselves to do so.

The Transition to Mature Capitalism

'The transition to mature capitalism': surely a term that needs to be used with care, for the transition can occur so incrementally that it may be noticed only when it has been completed. In Italy it involved a shift from semi-peripheral status into the 'perimeter of the core' of capitalist production,[6] a decline of old social actors, and increasing opportunities for new ones. As such a transition becomes visible, grievances are identified and connected, both to each other and to underlying changes, revealing at once lines of conflict and the potential alliances on either side of those lines.

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[4] This idea is close to what Piven and Cloward mean when they write of the 'transvaluation' of grievances, which persuades people who have traditionally accepted their lot to revolt (1977: ch. 1).

[5] Such changes are similar to those which occur in what Wallerstein (1985) calls 'semi-peripheral' countries, though they seem more typical of what Lange (1985) calls 'the periphery of the core'. My argument about the political opportunities created by transitions to mature capitalism is found in Tarrow (1985).

Transitions make social conflicts increasingly sharp and visible, but they also increase the importance of political exchange, as traditional elites seek protection from the state, new groups arise and demand resources, and reforms are attempted by governments still too tied to traditional support bases to carry them through effectively. In this context, temporary disequilibria in the balance of power can be exploited by groups whose social power under ordinary conditions would be minimal. One thinks, for example, of the role of blacks in the United States—surely one of the most marginal groups in political history—who gained political resources from the electoral realignment of the 1960s (see Piven and Cloward 1977: ch.4).

Such a transition was occurring in the Italy of the 1960s. Together with the erosion of the postwar political settlement, it would diffuse the protest wave of those years more widely in Italy than in any other European country. The sharp increase in the size of the educated middle class has already been noted; other changes could be seen in a shift within industry to integrated, large-scale production (Arrighi and Silver 1983), and in the weakening position of small and traditional firms. But the most visible effect was the tightening of the labour market and the new leverage that this gave to industrial workers (Paci 1975).

This was first evident in 1960–1, as full employment was reached for the first time and organized labour tried to take advantage of it with strikes at both firm and national level. The authorities' response was to trigger the recession of 1962–3, which the short run had the desired cooling-off effect (Salvati 1975). But management, rather than following up with investment in new plant and equipment to increase productivity, tried to get more out of existing resources by speeding up production lines and relying on a new levy of semi-skilled, largely male immigrant labour (Paci 1975).

Capitalist enterprises are not without answers to the conundrum of full employment and increasing wages. They can move to low-wage regions and countries, import unorganized foreign workers, decentralize production, or urge the passage of corporatist compacts backed by incomes policies. But in Italy a social compact was obstructed by the absence of trade-union unity, by the unwillingness of management to recognize the unions on across-the-board issues, and by the association of corporatism with the country's Fascist experience. As for reserves of cheap domestic labour, these were being depleted, and management lacked the reserves of capital to move out of traditional centres of working-class militance.

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[6] 'The concept is meant . . . to capture the recency of a change in position and, thus, the difference between a consolidated position in the world economy and the processes of transition from one position to another—processes which begin when the country is in the semi-periphery but continue after it has structurally already entered the core.' (Lange 1985: 185).

Why Italian management failed to re-capitalize in the mid-sixties is a complicated question. It was in part because of a weak internal capital market and in part because the habit of relying on a reserve of exploitable labour died hard. But there was also a political reason: management hesitation to invest heavily in new plant and equipment because of its fear of the social consequences of the Socialist party's imminent entry into the government (Ginsborg 1990: ch.6).

By the late 1960s, when the full impact of international competition brought on by the EEC began to be felt, the results of a failure to renew plant and equipment were plain to see. Many large firms were still heavily dependent on intensive labour exploitation as the labour market tightened. These problems coincided with the growing unity of organized labour to produce a more militant labour force just as the world economy—fuelled by the U.S. war economy—began to expand. But now, unlike the situation in the early 1960s, neither deflationary policies nor labour repression would be possible, for, in the interim, a major governmental realignment had occurred.

The same period was also revealing a profound secularization of Italian society, especially in the metropolitan areas of the North, where church attendance was down, family ties had been loosened, and people were becoming available for new associations. The partisan subcultures that had heretofore structured many people's lives—as well as their voting behaviour—were in profound decline. For secularization not only meant a decline in religious practice and in the strength of party-controlled 'mass organizations'; it also produced demands for civic modernization and for increased access to services, educational opportunities, and new social networks. The temporary increase in the marginal power of labour coincided with an increased assertiveness and independence in civil society. Both were reinforced by new political opportunities.

Political Opportunities

The protest movements of the late 1960s invented new forms of protest and brought a new independence and imagination to mass politics; but they took most of their issues from the debates of the early part of the decade. In this period, there was a widespread debate over the transition to mature capitalism and its costs and promises. In governmental circles this debate focused on planning, on the technical needs of a modern society, and on the defects of the existing industrial relations system. On the left there was an open debate on the tendencies in modern capitalism and on the growing role of the new middle class—what the PCI called the 'productive middle strata'.

The academic tone of these debates at first disguised the politically new fact that they bridged political subcultures and had the potential for broadening the arena of controversy to include new actors. In governmental circles, debates on the economy were stimulated by a small but influential group of liberal thinkers in and around the small Republican party, led by Ugo la Malfa, budget minister in the first Centre-Left government. But it also had expressions in Catholic circles, particularly in a group of younger economists who had come out of Catholic Action and were active in the Interministerial Commission for the South and in the semipublic SVIMEZ (Association for the Development of the South).

Arguments turned in part on the lack of a modern industrial relations system. Athough much of management was still unwilling to change its paternalistic and repressive labour relations, there were outcroppings of modernism in the Olivetti empire in the private sector, and among younger technocrats in the public sector. While the private firms represented by the manufacturer's association, Confindustria, wanted to continue to rely on national-level bargaining, thus keeping the unions out of the workplace, the public firms represented in IRI (Institute for Industrial Reconstruction) and ENI (National Hydrocarbons Trust) wanted to institute articulated bargaining procedures at the level of the firm.

On the left, the debate was more theoretical but was no less portentious. The Communists, through their Gramsci Institute in Rome, held an important conference on 'Tendencies in Italian Capitalism', which put them ten years ahead of their French comrades in recognizing the effects of economic change (Gramsci Institute 1962). A strategic debate on the role of the 'productive' middle class began in the party at the same time, as—sensing the decline of its traditional rural supporters—the party looked for new electoral allies in parts of the middle class that were created by advanced capitalism.

As for the Socialists, they were more concerned with readying themselves for a future role in government than with understanding the future of Italian capitalism. But political opportunism has strange effects: the prospect of joining the government led the PSI to put reforms on its political agenda—education, planning, pension reform—which would later become rallying points for mass protest. Ironically, but not for the first time in history, the themes of future protest movements were popularized by the very people who would eventually be the targets of those movements.

The national debate on the educational system that began in the late 1950s was a prime example of how issues raised within the establishment could provide an agenda for later protest. Stimulated in part by academic initiatives and in part by the demand for more technical cadres in industry, the government passed a reform law in 1962 that was so quickly revealed as inadequate that it led to intensified debate on its revision. It was this debate that stimulated the outbreak of the student protests that we shall see in Chapter 6.

These debates, together with the economic and social changes that had stimulated them, made Italians conscious of the profound changes under way in their country, traced the rough boundaries of a potential constituency for modernization, and sketched the axes of future confrontation. In the circles of power, they made clear that a realignment of some kind was necessary if the DC was not to follow the decline of its traditional social groups with its own political decline. The major political result was the contested, ambiguous and still poorly-understood strategy of the DC's 'Opening to the Left' and the Centre-Left coalition that it produced.

IV THE CENTRE-LEFT GOVERNMENT

Just as the postwar Italian political settlement was rooted in the international system, a number of international developments—from the Soviet Twentieth party congress to detente, from the Kennedy presidency to the papacy of John XXIII—set the stage for the Centre-Left government by providing new political opportunities to existing actors within the party system. The events in Eastern Europe allowed the PSI to end its unsatisfactory electoral alliance with the Communists, making it available for cooperation with other political forces. The impact of the Kennedy presidency and changes in the Church was to weaken both anti-communism and religious faith as strategic bulwarks of DC power. And the effect of all three events was to allow Italy to escape the Christ vs. Communism atmosphere of the 1950s and open up the possibility of new political alignments more suited to the needs of an advanced industrial democracy.

Such was the atmosphere in which the DC brought the Socialists into government in 1963–64.[7] The Opening to the Left was neither the first nor the last stratagem the Christian Democrats used to hold on to power. The DC had always been willing to share resources with other political groups, first with the conservative Liberals and then with the moderate Social Democrats and Republicans. But when coalition politics was extended to the Socialists, it became a much more risky undertaking, not only because of the unsteady nature of the PSI, but for two more fundamental reasons: first, broadening the coalition to a party with close to fifteen per cent of the vote placed new burdens on the reservoirs of available patronage; and, second, the Centre-Left coalition incorporated new ideological cleavages within the government that could be radicalized by those who were left outside.

Coalition Politics and Patronage

As a coalition expands it becomes more difficult to manage, as could be seen in the increasing time it took to resolve governmental crises and in the growing delays in getting government business done in the 1960s. With the entry of the PSI, which had lacked access to national power since 1947, into the government, patronage needs expanded just at the time that the rate of economic growth began to decline. A good sign of this is that the number of parliamentary bills by private members mushroomed (Di Palma 1977). This both increased expenditure and took initiative for distributive spending out of the control of the government, but it addressed none of the structural problems of the political economy.

The expanding coalition and the absence of a strong executive also encouraged the proliferation of factions within the parties of government, particularly in the DC, just as major reform issues—pensions, education, industrial relations—were coming up. If a group of parliamentary notables could count on the unhampered delivery of resources through a given ministry, they could ignore governmental policy and even undercut its majority, hoping in the subsequent negotiations to enhance their own power. The Centre-Left not only increased the number of factions in the DC; it also made possible cross-party alliances between factions in the two major coalition partners.

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[7] I owe at least part of my understanding of the *centrosinistra* period to my exchanges with Paul Ginsborg, whose forthcoming study, *Italy since 1943*, will provide the basis for a thoroughgoing reinterpretation of the Italian Republican experience.

This factional weakness helps to explain why the coalition experiment failed in its major political goal—to isolate the PCI. Although the Centre-Left governments kept the Communists at bay for a number of years and drove them out of many municipalities that they had jointly governed with the PSI, it left their predominant position in the unions and in the working-class electorate unharmed. Indeed PCI electoral gains accompanied the start of the Centre-Left in 1963 and continued in the 1967 elections. That the Communists did *not* lose electorally from the co-optation of the Socialists into the government assured them in their conviction that the country might still have a left-wing future.

The Widening Circle of Conflict

The debates that followed the Centre-Left experience in Italy are similar in many ways to debates about the New Deal in the United States; both revolved around the academic issue of whether they were progressive or conservative. As with the New Deal, the 'inherent' progressivism of the Centre-Left government was less important than the fact that it placed issues on the agenda that it could not resolve and—by its own internal divergences—provided opportunities for groups outside the polity to intervene in debates that began within it.

Was the Centre-Left reformist? Of course it was, but because the Socialists achieved so few of their reforms after so much fanfare, mass mobilization was stimulated. For example, although the PSI was able to persuade the DC to nationalize electricity as a condition for joining the government, control over the funds paid to investors was immediately given up (Ginsborg 1990). The PSI had also called for economic planning, but although a planning commission was created, it was soon clear that it would be denied power over the spending ministries (LaPalombara 1966).

Nonetheless, the inclusion of the Socialists in the coalition placed new issues on the agenda and exposed them to public criticism in a way that made plain how divided the government was and how evenly-divided were the forces on either side of the debate. For example, the 1967 debate over pension reform started in Parliament but soon led to wide-spread mobilization of the workers. The famous 'Gui bill' for the reform of higher education mobilized both educational interest groups and college students. The bill never passed, but the divisions in Parliament and among educators gave the students encouragement to organize against it. Finally, it was largely due to PSI presence in the government that a modern industrial relations bill—the *statuto dei lavoratori*—was eventually passed.

There is another parallel with the New Deal: that the presence of a party of the moderate left in the government limited its options for repressing both student and worker dissent. Neither the old recessionary solution to wage increases, nor unleashing the forces of 'order' against demonstrators, nor the use of political anticommunism were possible with the PSI attempting to preserve its claim to a share of working-class votes and trying to gain support from the new middle class.

With the wave of student and worker dissent that began in the second half of the 1960s, it became clear that—like the New Deal government in the mid-1930s—the PSI could not afford politically to support repressive policies. For example, when workers were shot upon by police in Avola and Battipaglia in 1968, the PSI called for an investigation and joined the Communists in a call to disarm the police.

With all their defects, the reforms of the Centre-Left were significant, not for what it accomplished, but for demonstrating what it could *not* accomplish and for revealing the extent of the cleavages in the elite. The DC continued to defend its bastions of patronage even as new groups were demanding entry, and both the working class and the new middle class were becoming more militant in their demands. Though the Socialists were not very effective representatives of either, their entry into government indicated the instability of the postwar political settlement and the depth of the realignment at work in the country.

Soon after the effective start of the Centre-Left experiment in 1964, conflict began to stir within the party system. Splits in the Socialist and Republican parties in 1963 and 1964 were followed by an attempted merger between the Socialists and Social Democrats and by talk of forming a unified party of labour in the moderate wing of the PCI. After years of ignoring the issue, the politicians began to talk about regional reform, an issue that was thought to have appeal in the South. Reform of industrial relations was another issue placed on the political agenda by the parties or by industrial relations experts close to them.

The real ferment was stirring outside the party system, where new political groups were appearing and mobilization began to escape traditional channels for the first time since the 1940s. The implications of this situation—which will be the subject of the rest of this book—were quickly evident to conservatives such as Emilio Colombo. In 1969 he would ask the national council of the DC:

> Where have we fallen short? It seems to me that reforms have been at a stand-still, so that the structures of civil society have aged further and the whole fabric has deteriorated. Social forces have not found suitable channels for the expression of their sense of freedom . . . .The moment of pluralism . . . is becoming in our society a moment of disorder. (Quoted in Lumley 1983: 133)

Colombo, the consummate politician, understood instantly what it has taken social scientists a century to discover: that protest, far from representing the negation of politics, grows out of the cleavages of a changing society and has to be dealt with politically. But how would the 'moment of disorder' be turned into a 'moment of pluralism': by repression, by reform, by the inherent dynamics of the protest cycle, or by a combination of all three? This is the major question of this book.

CONCLUSION

Unbearable strains are often placed on political systems by forces outside their control, as was the case for the Fourth French Republic. In others, the system can be eroded through the evolution of its internal characteristics. It is the latter process that has been described in the Italian case. The international situation that had produced its internal political settlement was no more; the power of anti-communism and religiosity to hold together the governing coalition had disappeared; the DC's centrist strategy obliged it to add new actors whose appetites and policy demands stretched the capacities of the country's weak institutions. More than anything, an old social actor—the organized working class—was gaining new strength just as new social groups—immigrant workers and the new middle strata—were beginning to demand their due. It was from these groups that the major constituencies for the coming wave of protest would be drawn.

Italy's political settlement came under great strain in the 1960s, in part as a result of the social changes described above, but in part through the development of its own internal structures. No major foreign policy or constitutional crisis divided the society; no major war or domestic insurrection had to be faced; until the mid-1970s, the economy never faced a major crisis. But the inherent characteristics of the postwar settlement evolved in directions that were less and less viable as a system of governing. It was the conflicts of a maturing capitalist society and the divisions in its political class that produced the issues and the cleavages that widened into a major protest cycle.

The next decade would force the country to confront what Colombo called a 'moment of disorder'. Could the political system transform it into a 'moment of pluralism'? To the extent that this depended on the capacities of a divided political class, critics were certain that disorder would turn into anarchy. But once launched, I shall argue, a cycle of protest develops its own internal dynamic that does not depend on the capacity of governing elites to satisfy people's grievances or on their capacity for repression. To adapt Colombo's metaphor, disorder arises out of the normal conflicts and institutions of a capitalist democracy and produces *its own* 'moment of pluralism' through the internal dynamic of a cycle of protest, as we shall see below.

3

THE REPERTOIRE OF CONTENTION

In Italo Calvino's novel, *The Baron in the Trees*, the young baron reacts to the boredom and suffocation of life on his family's estate by engaging in an act of madness—he goes up into the trees to live. His younger brother thinks:

> It wasn't as if I didn't understand that my brother had no intention of coming down. But I made believe I didn't understand, in order to get him to say: 'I'm going to stay in the trees until snack time . . . or until sunset . . . or until dinnertime . . . or until it gets dark'—to say something that would *signify a limit and put his act of protest into proportion* [Italics added]. Instead, he said nothing of the sort, and it was then that I began to be afraid. (Calvino 1985: 16 [my trans.])

People who Dare

Calvino's novel contains a sharp insight into the nature of protest. It is the apparent madness of the Baron's act—indeed, its impossibility—that gives his protest its force. No one has ever climbed into the trees to live before: how can he do such a thing? How can a man spend his life up there? The disruptive power of his protest lies in its lack of limits and in the uncertainty it causes about when he intends to come down. The protest is effective because it makes the impossible real.

Dramatic, unlimited, and expressive actions are found not only in fiction. 'Moments of madness'—when 'all is possible'—recur repeatedly in the history of collective action—in the French Revolution, the Paris Commune, the storming of the Winter Palace. In such moments, writes Aristide Zolberg, 'the wall between the instrumental and the expressive collapses'; 'politics bursts its bounds to invade all of life'; and 'political animals somehow transcend their fate' (1972: 183). In such moments, when the constraints of everyday life collapse, people play roles they could not have imagined or would have laughed at before. Zolberg writes:

> Liberated from the constraints of time, place, and circumstance, from history, men choose their parts from the available repertory or forge new ones in an act of creation. (1972: 176)

But how often do protesters adopt such extreme and dramatic tactics? Not very often, to learn from Charles Tilly's studies of the history of European collective action. He writes:

> At any point in time, the repertoire of collective actions available to a population is surprisingly limited. Surprisingly, given the innumerable ways in which people could, in principle, deploy their resources in pursuit of common ends. (1978: 151)

Ordinary people, constrained by their lack of resources and intimidated by fear of repression, are more likely to use the existing repertoire of contention to express their grievances than to dare to break the limits of convention.

But here is a paradox: if people want to gain a hearing and convince others that their demands are just, their actions *must* maximize the elements of novelty, threat, and surprise. As Peter Eisinger writes:

> What is implicitly threatening in a protest is not only the socially unconventional display of crowds of people which offends and frightens norm-abiding observers, but the visions which bystanders and targets conjure up about what such obviously angry behavior could lead to. (1973: 13–14)

Violence, notes Eisinger, is seldom the intention of protesters, because there is nothing uncertain about it. But unless someone breaks the cake of custom, there will never be any change in the repertoire of contention and elites will continue to keep popular discontent within acceptable boundaries. The aim of protest is disruption, and people achieve disruption by creating uncertainty about how far they are willing to go.

But not everyone has the capacity or the will to break the limits of convention. A few people who break away from the forms of collective action in unusual circumstances produce intensive mass movements at the peak of protest waves; those who follow their example limit themselves to conventional forms of collective action. In breaking through the surface of convention, the 'early risers' demonstrate that the system is vulnerable, that defiance can work, and that claims can be satisfied. 'Latecomers' may be less imaginative and more constrained by convention, but since the costs of protest have already been lowered, they need take only small risks within accepted limits to impress opponents with their numbers and organization. The early risers open the gates of convention; the latecomers pour through them.

Mass movements, in this view, do not rise up like isolated volcanoes of social action from a plain of consent; they constitute an intensive peak of confrontation amid a much broader range of conventional protest. New social and political actors explode on to the public stage with elements of drama and enthusiasm, inspiring others to follow their example in less daring ways. Mass movements are but the most visible and intensive peaks in the broader range of more conventional protest that surrounds them.[1]

Two questions will guide us as we survey the forms of disruption in Italy between 1966 and 1973: first, how do the elements of innovation and rupture noted by Zolberg and Eisinger compare with the elements of convention observed by Tilly? Second, is there an observable relationship between convention and contention within a protest cycle? Does the cycle proceed from spontaneous, disruptive, and violent protest to conventional forms and thence to institutionalization? From the latter to the former? Or does the intensive and creative peak of disruption arise out of institutional politics, only to return there at the end of the cycle?

We shall first trace the amount of protest in Italy from 1965 through 1974, focusing on the changes in institutionalization, as indicated by the presence or absence of known organizations. Then we shall survey the conventional, confrontational, and violent forms of protest found in the newspaper record and ask how the balance among them changed over time. Finally, we shall try to estimate the disruptiveness of protest in different periods of the cycle. We shall see that it describes a curve from institutionalized and conventional protest at the beginning to a summit of confrontational mass action early in the cycle, followed by a long expansion of the social movement sector later on, when most people were returning to institutionalized and organized forms of behaviour and a few engaged in organized violence.

I THE SEASONS OF DISCONTENT

Figure 3.1 presents the total number of protest events recorded from our reading of the *Corriere della Sera* for the ten-year period 1965–74. For the eight years 1966–73 it records the almost 5,000 individual events that were identified from a daily reading of the newspaper; for the two years 1966 and 1974, for which we do not possess detailed data, it estimates the number of events by extrapolation from four months during each year (see Appenix B for details).

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[1] The argument presented here summarizes an earlier paper, Tarrow (1987*a*). For comments on that paper I am grateful to David Apter, Peter Lange, Charles Tilly, and Aristide Zolberg.

Figure 3.1 shows that Italy in the mid-1960s was not entering a brief 'moment of madness'—as did France in 1968—but an extended period of social and political unrest that first rose in 1966–8, peaked only after the turn of the decade, and never declined to anything like the level of protest in the mid-1960s. The curve is based on the total number of protest events *of all types* that will be analysed in this chapter, from routine petitions, delegations, and strikes to public marches and demonstrations, occupations and traffic obstruction, all the way to clashes with police and organized violence.[2]

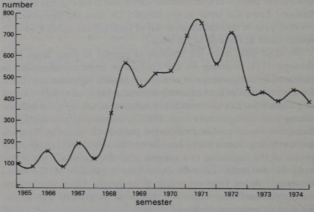

FIG. 3.1 Number of events, 1965–74.

How did protest change from one period to the next? In the survey that follows we shall largely ignore the social actors involved (these will be discussed in the next chapter) and their grievances and demands, which will be dealt with in Chapter 5. We shall focus only on the repertoire of protest activity and on its degree of institutionalization, as measured by the presence or absence of movement organizations, trade unions, political parties, and party mass organizations.

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[2] The figure includes both coded events and those for which a defining grievance, a starting date, or a disruptive form of action could *not* be identified. The quantitative analysis in the remainder of this chapter, and in the book in general, is based only on the protest events for which these data are available. For 1965 and 1974, years for which detailed analysis has not been carried out, the number of events in each semester has been estimated from a one-month-in-four sampling procedure.

1965–6: The Baseline

In 1965, a total of 181 strikes, protests, and social conflicts were estimated to have occurred from a four-month sample of articles in *Corriere della Sera*. By 1966, the number of protests identified had risen to 204, a very low increase, given that 1966 was a year of contract renewal negotiations in both industry and public services (Accornero 1971: 128–31). It was also a year in which student protest began to appear and in which a terrorist movement for autonomy exploded in the German-speaking areas of Alto Adige (South Tyrol). The average of 190 protest events reported or estimated from the *Corriere della Sera* in 1965–6, however, was already higher than in previous years.[3]

Most of these events contained some form of known organization. Unions, which were observed in half the events in 1966, predominated over parties and party mass organizations, and known regionalist groups were present in almost 14 per cent. Only a small number of youth and student protests outside these traditional channels were traced from the newspaper data, but they will turn out to have been highly disruptive (see Chapter 6). Extraparliamentary organizations were virtually unknown.

The Upward Spiral

In 1967 the number of conflicts increased by 17 per cent over the preceding year.[4] Despite the completion of most contract negotiations in industry, a total of 240 events were identified. The first sign that a protest cycle was gathering was this increase in the number of conflicts, for, normally, the number of events decreases at the end of union–management contract negotiations. As 1966 was generally conceded to be a failure by the labour movement, the increase in collective action in 1967 was particularly significant.

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[3] A rapid scanning for 1963–4 suggests that less than 150 protests a year were reported in the *Corriere*, 30 less than in 1965 and 50 less than in 1966. Although these are the roughest of estimates, they are corroborated by work in progress by Giovanni Arrighi and Beverly Silver from other newspaper sources. I am grateful to them for this information.

[4] Each time there was a large percentage increase in the number of conflicts, there was a temporary decline in the proportion of events with sufficient information to be coded, indicating a lag for newspapers without the staff or the tradition to report social protest. See Appendix B for a comparison of coded and uncodeable events in each semester.

In 1967, the degree of institutionalization of protest already began to decline. The participation of known organizations fell from 66 to 58 per cent of the events, and unions were present in fewer than 40 per cent of the total. The newspaper data show that Italy's *sessantotto* (1968) was in full swing by the second half of 1967. (We shall see in Chapter 6 that the first significant university protests occurred in this year.) There is a gradual increase in the presence of extraparliamentary organizations, but parties and their mass organizations also appear in over ten per cent of the protests.

By the spring of 1968, we are in the presence of a full-blown cycle of protest. The number of events had more than doubled over the number in 1967. As new actors entered the scene and different sectors became engaged—particularly in education—there was a further decline in the institutionalization of protest. For example, the proportion of events in which known organizations appeared fell to less than half of the total; only one-quarter now involve the unions and only five per cent the parties or their mass organizations. Extraparliamentary and other groups appear in over one-quarter of the events.

The Hot Autumn

In 1969 and 1970 the number of protests continued to rise, though not at the same rate as in 1968. These two years were marked by a predominance of conflict in industry and services, with a decline in educational protests and a large number of conflicts in new areas—religion, culture, the city. But signs of the institutionalization of protest are already appearing, especially in the factory. In this period, the unions, which had been taken by surprise by the increase in grassroots militance in 1968, begin to regain control by 'riding the tiger'—adopting the radical demands and tactics of shopfloor militants (Regini 1978)—but also by campaigning for social reform. Parties and their mass organizations again appear in almost ten per cent of the protests, showing that they have begun to regain the initiative.

But these two years also saw a strong presence of both extraparliamentary and other organizations, which, between them, are present in 20 per cent of the protests in 1969 and in over 30 per cent in 1970. The proportion of conflicts run by known organizations holds steady at about half the total, but the presence of the unions declines in 1970 as that of extraparliamentary groups increases. The Hot Autumn was clearly a mixture of re-institutionalization and confrontation.

Downward Slope or Plateau?

The year 1971 was the high point in the number of protests, but it was also a transition year in which the rate of increase in the number of events levelled off. There are now clear signs of institutionalization; though known organizations were present in less than half the events, union participation increased from 22 to 27 per cent of the total. Union presence is even more widespread than the statistics show, for, by now, the factory councils that emerged in the conflicts of 1968–9 have evolved into the plant-level representative bodies of the unions. At the same time, extraparliamentary groups have provided themselves with permanent national structures.

In 1972 and 1973 the number of protest events declined definitively—by 11 per cent in the former year and 20 per cent in the latter. But this decline in the frequency of protest was only relative. By 1973 the number of events was still three times higher than it had been in 1966. Our estimate for 1974, estimated from a one-in-four month sample of articles in the *Corriere*, is roughly the same as the number of events identified in 1973.

So here is a puzzle: how could the end of the protest cycle be occurring simultaneously with so high a frequency of protest? Either the cycle of protest was not yet over, or the boundaries of participation had been expanded during the cycle so that once-unusual events had become almost routine. Was the cycle of mass protest extending into the late 1970s or had the unexpected become normal? We shall see below and in later chapters that, by the early 1970s, much of the protest was institutionalized, while another important segment was not mass protest but was composed of violent conflicts and attacks on others.

In terms of institutionalization, the cycle was nearly complete by 1971. The number of events run by known organizations—already higher in 1971—increased to 53 per cent in 1972 and to 58 per cent in 1973, with a smaller growth in union-sponsored events. The factory councils were operating smoothly as the unions' shopfloor representatives and the unions themselves had achieved a modicum of national unity. With some crucial exceptions to be described below, protest was already institutionalized by the time the international oil shock introduced a new period of crisis.

The return to some of the patterns of 1966 and 1967 (e.g. many known organizations and high union participation) indicates that institutionalization had proceeded quite far. But the slow decline in mobilization and the increasing presence of extraparliamentary groups among the organizations that were organizing protests suggest either that the cycle was not over or that, if it was, there had been some lasting changes in the repertoire of participation. Table 3.1 summarizes the story so far by setting out year by year the presence of different types of organizations in the protests studied from the newspaper records.

TABLE 3.1. *Institutionalization of protest: the presence of different types organizations in protest events, by year (%)**

Organizational presence	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	Aver
Unions	49.5	37.5	26.1	25.7	22.4	26.8	27.5	29.9	27.
Parties	3.9	7.1	2.7	6.8	8.8	5.5	5.3	6.0	6.
Party mass organizations	2.0	4.2	2.5	2.3	6.2	3.6	2.6	3.4	3.
Other groups	13.7	12.5	16.6	14.4	13.9	8.2	7.6	8.4	11.2
Movement organizations	1.0	4.5	10.6	6.4	17.1	11.6	18.3	22.5	13.
Proportion unorganized	33.3	42.1	50.5	50.6	48.3	53.5	47.2	42.5	47.
Total events (No.)	204	240	517	686	876	924	830	669	498

*Percentages do not add up to 100% because of the presence of more than one type of organizatio many events.

Table 3.1 shows a number of things that will prove important in later chapters. First, looking at the next-to-last line in the table, it shows that the proportion of protests without known organizations peaked early in the cycle—in 1968–9, the years in which student and worker insurgency coincided. Second, looking up at the first line, we can see that relative union participation—high at the beginning—declined rapidly in the late 1960s and never again returned to the level of 1966.[5] Third, the proportion with parties and party mass organizations—after declining sharply in 1968—recovered quickly; by the end of the period, they were present in twice the proportion of protests as at the beginning. Fourth, the largest proportional increase towards the end of the period is explained by the sharp growth of social movement organizations.

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[5] Of course, the decline of union presence is relative only to the total number of protests, both within and outside the factory. Total union participation in strikes increased substantially during the period. For data on union growth and presence in strikes, see Ch. 7.

Why did the number of protest events decline so much more slowly in the 1970s than the rise of protest in the late 1960s? The presence of movement organizers who were using disruptive collective action to gain political space is one explanation. Another is the rise of violence. But a third possibility is that there was, as an outcome of the cycle, a permanent expansion of the repertoire of democratic participation to include forms of action that were not present before. Before we can assess this hypothesis, we must look in more detail at how the forms of collective action were evolving between conventional, confrontational, and violent forms of action.

II THE FORMS OF DISRUPTION

Was there a major difference in the forms of protest used at the beginning and at the end of the cycle? If not, then cynics may be correct when they claim that protest waves, like revolutions, produce a lot of sound and fury but leave nothing in their wake but disillusionment. We shall see that at least two things changed in the repertoire of protest: first, there was an increase in political violence towards the end of the period; and, second, there was an incremental expansion in the use of democratic forms of participation that would prevent party elites from ever again possessing a monopoly of representation.

Setting Limits: The Conventional Repertoire

In writing about individual political action, Barnes and Kaase point out that, in contrast to the antinomy between conventional and unconventional forms of participation found in proverbial wisdom, the same individuals often prefer to engage in both (1979). Our data about the forms of collective action parallel Barnes's and Kaase's findings, although they can only talk about individual preferences and we can only analyse collective behaviour. Indeed, although violence and confrontations are what will be best remembered about the Italian cycle of protest, conventional forms of participation were both numerically and proportionally dominant throughout the decade. In Italy, as elsewhere, when public involvements increase, they increase across the board (Hirschman 1982).

TABLE 3.2. *Incidence of all forms of action as percentage of total events and of total forms of action*

Action form	% of events	% of forms	No. of forms
Strike	39.6	20.3	1974
March	24.2	12.4	1206
Public meeting	19.2	9.8	955
Occupation	16.3	8.3	812
Obstruction	16.0	8.2	797
Assembly	14.2	7.3	709
Petition	12.8	6.6	639
Violent attack	11.8	6.0	589
Attack on property	11.7	6.0	584
Violent conflict	10.0	5.1	497
Clash with police	7.7	3.9	382
Miscellaneous forms	3.1	1.6	154
Forced entry	2.0	1.0	100
Hunger strike	1.4	.7	70
Rampage	1.2	.6	58
Direct action	1.0	.4	48
Unclassifiable	1.0	.4	48
Leafleting	.7	.3	33
Symbolic	.7	.3	33
Legal action	.4	.2	18
Random violence	.3	.1	15
Theft	.2	.1	11
Campout	.1	.1	7
Total	*	99.7	9739

*This column is based on multiple items which add up to more than 100% because more than one form of action could be used in the same protest event.

Table 3.2 presents the incidence of various forms of collective action that were in any way disruptive, as indicated in the newspaper data we have collected for the period 1966–73.[6] In the table, each form of action is first expressed as a proportion of the total number of protests and then as a proportion of the total number of forms of action. (We shall see below that some events contained more than one form of action.) Table 3.3 then groups the individual protest forms into three subtypes: conventional, confrontational and violent types of action.

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[6] Forms of action were considered 'disruptive' when they were direct actions intended to cause interference with the lives, routines, interests, or benefits of elites, public authorities, or other groups or were organized to plan such actions. Thus verbal statements, however extreme or violent, were not counted as protest actions. But actual direct actions—even when they took relatively pacific forms, such as a march or a public meeting—are counted as forms of protest. Although it was not our goal (nor would it have been possible) to record all *non*-disruptive direct actions, we did keep track of legal actions, delegations, and petitions when these were accompanied in the same action or dispute by disruptive direct actions.

Looking first at the individual forms of action listed in Table 3.2, we can see that the first three in numerical order of importance are conventional forms, but that confrontational forms—occupations and obstructions—rank respectively fourth and fifth, while four violent forms rank only eighth to eleventh. Table 3.3 underscores the numerical predominance of the conventional repertoire. When all the conventional forms are totalled, they constitute 56 per cent of the total forms of action reported in the newspaper data, while confrontational forms appeared in 19 per cent and violence in 23 per cent.

TABLE 3.3. *Conventional, confrontational, and violent forms of action as percentage of total forms and total events*

Type of form	% of total forms of action	No. of forms
Conventional forms	56.1	6745
Confrontational and symbolic forms	18.9	1698
Violent forms	23.1	2075
Other, unclassifiable	2.1	186
Total forms	100.2	9006

The lesson of these two tables is clear: while some Italians fought, looted, burned, and rioted (we shall analyse the incidence of these different forms of violence in Chapter 12), others were engaging in confrontational but essentially peaceful disruption, while most never went beyond the limits of the inherited repertoire. Cycles of protest are made up of both disruptive mass movements and conventional repertoires of collective action, but most people's actions are closer to conventional politics than to violence.

The most commonly used conventional form was the strike, followed by marches and public meetings. Assemblies in the place of work were the next in frequency,[7] followed by more routine forms (e.g. petitions, audiences, leafleting, and legal action). Among these forms, petitioning—perhaps the oldest form of democratic participation—was far and away the most common. Italian protesters struck, marched, occupied, obstructed, and attacked; but they also sought redress through petition, audiences, and peaceful assemblies, used either alone or in combination with more contentious actions.[8]

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[7] Assemblies were enumerated only when they occurred in connection with a disruptive action—e.g. to call a strike or during an occupation. Simple assemblies, or assemblies that did not result in a disruptive action, were not considered to be disruptive, since many of these were held to discuss strikes that never took place. This procedure no doubt considerably understates the frequency of assemblies.

Did the peak of mobilization bring about a decline in conventional forms of participation? The first important finding about the dynamic of the protest cycle is that the use of conventional forms increased in parallel with mobilization in general. As protest was diffused to new population groups and into different sectors of Italian life, most people used the conventional repertoire, and did not turn to confrontation and violence.

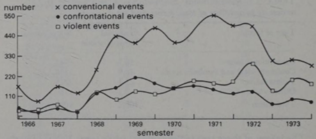

FIG. 3.2 Incidence of conventional, confrontational, and violent events, 1966–73.

In Figure 3.2, these data on the different forms of conventional protest aggregated by subtype are traced over the eight year period for which we possess detailed data. The three curves in Figure 3.2 show us three things. First, conventional, confrontational, and violent forms all rose in remarkably parallel fashion during the first two and a half years. Second, the major change after 1968 was that the use of confrontational action declined and was replaced in second place by violence. Third, despite the simultaneous rise of confrontational and violent protest early in the period, it was the conventional forms of conflict that predominated throughout.

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[8] We did not attempt to trace the sequence of different action forms within disputes, and, as a result, we cannot affirm whether petitioning preceded, accompanied, or followed more disruptive forms of action. Case studies presented below will suggest strongly that most protesters tried to exhaust traditional forms of redress before turning to more disruptive actions. For a major attempt to trace the action phases of contentious events, see Tilly (1982, 1986*b*, 1987*a* and *b*).

As for confrontation—which will be our major empirical indicator of disruptive mass movements—it was never more common than the conventional repertoire, and it was more common than violence only in the relatively short period from 1968 to the end of 1969—what we shall refer to from now on as the 'intensive peak of mobilization'. Mass movements coincide with an increase in protest in general, but decline more rapidly than either violence or conventional protest.

A brief outline of the main conventional forms of conflict used by Italians in this period will provide a sense of what the period must have been like for most people:

The strike

There is a partial exception to the almost linear patterns of increase and decrease in different forms of conventional action in Figure 3.2—strikes, which rose and fell in response to economic pressures, contract renewals, and plant closings. They were the most common and most conventional conflicts we found in the newspaper data.[9] They appeared in 40 per cent of the events and constituted over 20 per cent of the forms of action that were recorded. But they were proportionally more common at the beginning of the cycle—when other forms of protest were lacking—than they were at the end, when they were outstripped by other forms.

Although the strike is the quintessential weapon of the industrial working class, during these years it also became a conventional expression of dissent or a bargaining tool among such groups as civil servants, bank clerks, doctors, and lawyers, who had previously tried to differentiate themselves from the proletariat. Strikes were even symbolically employed by groups with few resources—such as mental patients, prisoners, and students at schools for the blind. People began to use the term 'strike' even when it was technically inappropriate, to empower their protests and link themselves to the major social actors.

Strikes often followed a ritualized sequence.[10] First the unions would hold conferences at which platforms were elaborated and voted upon; then brief strikes would be called in key firms or industries, usually those in which the unions were strongest; then union leaders, building on the momentum that had been demonstrated in these strongholds, would call national strikes; finally, contract negotiations would begin. When negotiations dragged on, new strikes would be called to put pressure on employers.

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[9] Strikes were defined as the withdrawal of labour or (in the case of non-producing institutions such as schools) non-cooperation in the institution's functioning. We shall see in Ch. 7 that strikes were frequently accompanied by more public, and more confrontational, forms of action, particularly when workers found allies among other groups.

[10] There is an extensive literature on the fluctuation in the strike rate during this period. See Bordogna and Provasi (1979), Cella and Regini (1985), Franzosi (1980, 1981, 1985, and 1988), Franzosi and de Caprariis (1981).

Public displays

The march and public meeting—the two classical forms of democratic public display—are the second and third most common forms of action we found in the newspaper data. Between them, they appeared in over one-third of the events and made up nearly 19 per cent of the total forms of protest used. They rose roughly in parallel to the magnitude of mobilization, but their peak came earlier than that of the total number of events, returning, by 1972, to roughly the same proportion of the total they had had in 1966, although in numerical terms, there were roughly three times as many marches and public meetings in 1973 as there were in the earlier year.

The march and the public meeting were so well patterned that their action phases could be virtually predicted. A meeting would be announced for a public square or open place. The organizers would get there first, with banners and flags, usually a rostrum, and sometimes a public address system to attract and hold a following. Marches would begin in the same way and then proceed along a pre-established route, with marshals to keep the crowd in check, and leaders marching arm-in-arm at the head of the column.

In Italy, as in the United States, the two forms frequently appeared in sequence, with the public meeting used as an assembly point for marchers who then set off over a predetermined route, or the march used as a ritualized passage through the city to a pre-arranged meeting place. The march and the public meeting appear in the same event in our protest data in a very high proportion of cases. Along with the factory assembly and the strike, these were the most closely linked and best organized forms of action.

Assemblies

Meetings within workplaces which are attended by those directly involved in a conflict are rarely physically disruptive but are usually held to plan a protest or to discuss one already in progress (Regalia 1975). They too tended to follow a regular scenario, from the distribution of handbills announcing the time and place of the meeting, to set speeches by leaders or militants, to votes on resolutions. The main function of assemblies was to decide on the forms of action to be used in a strike and to co-ordinate the necessary plans.

The assembly became the main tool of the factory councils that appeared on the shopfloors during the period of the Hot Autumn. In contrast to the old union shop committees, councils granted a vote in these assemblies to all workers. Though rowdy and often disorganized at the outset, the councils were soon dominated by the active minority of delegates who emerged in the strikes of 1968–9, and eventually came under the control of the unions, as we shall see in Chapter 7.

The assembly was also a stock-in-trade of university students, as a dramatic increase in its use in 1968 shows. Occupations were often decided on at assemblies, and the assembly was always part of an occupation in progress (Lumley 1983: 208 ff.). As the student movement spread from the university to the high schools, so did the use of the assembly (Lumley 1983: 225). Counting those in the schools and the factories together, assemblies were being used at the end of the period nearly twice as often as at the beginning.

Routine actions

Throughout this period of disorder and conflict, there was frequent recourse to delegations, petitions, leafleting, and legal actions. These routine forms of democratic behaviour appeared in 14 per cent of the events and made up 8 per cent of the total actions. Since we are studying only events that were in *some* way disruptive, we have understated their incidence, for events were not coded at all when they contained *only* these non-disruptive forms of action. Thus the proportion of routine actions we found in the newspaper record stands out all the more strikingly.

As we pass the peak of the cycle, the use of these routine forms declined—but much later than the marches, public meetings, and assemblies. By 1973, petitioning, gathering peacefully before authorities, leafleting and taking legal action are proportionally less common than they were a decade earlier. They were the casualties of the end of mobilization.

Thus the majority of conflicts in this period of mass mobilization were made up of conventional actions within the economy or the political system. Though conventional, they interfered with production, regular routines, and relations of authority. By the end of the period, the use of routine forms had declined, but the assembly, the march, and the public meeting were being used more than three times as often as they had been at the beginning. The cycle of protest left Italy with a much more vigorous repertoire of conventional collective action.

People who Dare: The Confrontational Repertoire

If there was a quantitative increase in conventional forms of participation during these years, there was a far more dramatic *qualitative* change in the use of unconventional forms of action. Occupations, obstructions, and forced entries—forms that are not violent but purposely place the actors in a potentially conflictual relationship with others or with authorities—were used in 30 per cent of the events and made up 17 per cent of total actions. As Figure 3.2 showed, the use of these forms increased earlier and more rapidly than mobilization as a whole, but their use had peaked by 1968 and suffered a rapid decline towards the end of the period. As they are the major forms that were associated with the intensive peak of mobilization, let us look at them individually to gain a sense of how they operated.

The occupation and the sit-in

In Italy, as in the United States during the 1960s, the occupation was the most frequently used confrontational action in this period, and the Italian version owed much to the American example. But the occupation soon spread from the campus to places of work and to public spaces and developed its own peculiar culture and ritual. As we shall see in Chapter 6, some faculties were almost continuously occupied from early in the 1967–8 academic year until the spring of 1969, with occupations interrupted only by vacations and by ever more frequent roustings by the police. It became a challenge to return to a building or faculty and to hold on to it after attacks by the police.

Obstructions and forced entries

Even more confrontational than the sit-in—because the results were less predictable—was the forced entry into closed schools and barred public buildings and the obstruction of routine public functions such as the circulation of traffic or execution of public business. Both of these forms increased rapidly from 1968 on. Obstruction was the far more common of the two, occurring in nearly 800 cases, as opposed to 100 for forced entries.

Physical obstruction was not the only technique that was used. Routine could be disrupted by simple non-cooperation —as was the case in the prison revolts that broke out in 1968—and production could be obstructed when workers set their own work schedule, as was the case for the *autoriduzione* campaigns that began in the Pirelli factory in the same year.[11]

Extending the strike

Traditionally, the strike has been used in Italy preceding periods of contract negotiation and under the control of the national unions. But in 1967 and 1968, strikes began to break out in factories and in shop sections (*reparti*) between contract negotiation periods and often without consultation with the unions (Reyneri 1978). These strikes were often unruly, sometimes violent, and always unsettling. We shall deal with them in some detail in Chapter 7.

Towards the turn of the decade, after the Hot Autumn of 1969 brought a restoration of union control in national contract negotiations, a new phase was added to the sequence; plant committees would regard contract agreements reached at the national level not as a ceiling, but as a floor on which to construct more ambitious plant-level agreements. As a result, conflict extended into the dip between contract negotiations, and the centre of gravity of the strike fell from the national level to the factory floor. In this phase, the unions were often present, 'riding the tiger' of shopfloor conflictuality, but the forms of strike action were bolder and more disruptive than in the earlier phase.

At the same time as workers were intensifying the forms of action they used, strikes began to be used by other social actors in conventional ways, but in areas and sectors in which they had previously been less common and had a high potential for disruption. Tram and bus drivers, airport baggage handlers, customs officials, bank clerks, teachers, and paramedical aides used the strike in conventional ways, but this 'tertiarization' of the strike weapon affected the public directly and expanded the boundaries of the social movement sector (Accornero 1985).

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[11] '*Autoriduzione* was a worker-controlled reduction in output . . . a form of industrial action that captured the imagination of wide sections of activists on the shopfloor, in the Left, within the trade unions, and in the social movements more generally.' (Lumley 1983: 329–30).

Expressive and symbolic actions

Symbolic disruption, whether in the form of burning effigies, engaging in hunger strikes, chaining oneself to railings, or using 'the practice of the objective' were far less common then might be expected. We observed the use of these forms in only three per cent of the total events and in less than two per cent of the total forms of action. Though few in number, these 'expressive' forms of action were important in that they made headlines, led to the widespread perception that the system could be ridiculed and attacked, and captured the imagination of the media and observers.[12] Such actions could also be part of larger scenarios, adding humour, surprise, and elements of drama to protests that might otherwise have failed to attract a following.

For example: when advocates of divorce held a hunger strike in Piazza Navona to publicize their demands, opponents looking for a way to counter-protest dramatically organized a banquet; when artists' models in Bologna wanted higher wages, they staged a strip-tease in Strada Maggiore; a couple embraced publicly at a sexuality conference in Messina to protest against sexual repression; earthquake victims from the Belice valley camped out in front of Palazzo Montecitorio, the seat of Parliament, to publicize the delays in government aid. The use of symbolic means of expression was inversely correlated with the level of organization of those making the claims, and they were most common at the intensive peak of mobilization.

Factory workers also adopted expressive forms of public display to publicize their demands. Their demonstrations often contained symbolic military elements. Mechanics would wear their work uniforms on public marches to the downtown areas, banging on milk cans with pipes and chanting as they marched. These demonstrations also contained distinct elements of play and theatre and bore a resemblance to the traditional carnival.[13] In the factory, internal marches were organized from shop to shop, punctuated with chants designed to show the power of the strikers, diffuse their enthusiasm to others, and intimidate opponents.

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[12] Lumley's exhaustive and imaginative work involves a careful study of such expressive forms of conflict. I am indebted to him for his insights into the culture of collective action in Italy in these years.

[13] Lumley quotes Marchetti's description of these demonstrations: 'As in a carnival, the demonstration created a sense of the world being turned upside down; for a day or a morning roles were reversed, and the workers became masters of their own time, of the city streets and business-centre, and of themselves.' (1983: 397).

The right to use conventional forms was sometimes only achieved by confrontation. Consider the assembly: it became common in the place of work only after a period of struggle. In 1966, even as contract negotiations were taking place, only 6.4 per cent of the events had included assemblies. This was because union organizers were not accepted in the factories. The right to assemble in the factory had to be fought for by the workers, who would carry union organizers into the plant on their shoulders until the right to assemble was accepted. In the schools as well, the right to assemble was one of the goals of more disruptive forms of protest. Confrontation was used in seeking the right to participate in more conventional activities: not so for a third category of collective action.

Breaking Limits: Disorder and Violence

Students of violence have too often confused it with illegal activity, confrontational actions, and the sometimes violent outcomes of inherently non-violent events.[14] For our purposes, violence can be defined as the deliberate use of physical force on behalf of collective goals. Overall, violent actions were observed in 22 per cent of the total forms of action found in the newspaper data.[15]

But the use of violence—though quickly fastened upon by the press and the authorities—was often incidental to the main intent of collective actors. As the Tillys write, 'Violent demonstrations . . . do not form a separate class of events; for the most part, they occur amid much larger numbers of otherwise similar nonviolent demonstrations' (1975: 282).

During the intensive peak of mobilization, violence most frequently occurred when demonstrators pushed forward with a plan to confront authorities or elites; when their plans were interrupted by the forces of order barring the way or charging them; when they encountered an opposing group bent on stopping them; or when a minority of demonstrators set out to radicalize a protest by attacking property, opponents, or the police. Only towards the end of the period did it frequently occur as the central intention of the protesters.

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[14] For example, much of the aggregate data-based research on the comparative sources of violence makes no distinction between the violence produced by protesters and that initiated by police or occurring in the course of an encounter. For a critique of the literature on political violence, see della Porta (1987).

[15] This figure leaves out the 3% of the events in which there were violent outcomes in the absence of an inherently violent form of action. For details, see della Porta and Tarrow (1986: 617–18).

TABLE 3.4. *Forms of violence used in protest events as percentage of total events and of total protest forms*

Protest events	% of total forms	% of total events	Total violent forms
Clash with police	7.7	3.9	4401
Violent conflict	10.0	5.1	497
Property damage	11.7	6.0	584
Violent attack	11.8	6.0	589
Rampage	1.2	.6	58
Random violence	.3	.1	15
Total	42.7	21.7	2183

Table 3.4 illustrates this variety by breaking down the use of violence into its various forms. The table shows that in 8 per cent of the events, violence took the form of a clash with police (who attacked whom in these clashes is another matter); in 10 per cent, there was a conflict between opposing groups; In 12 per cent, property was attacked. In only 12 per cent of the events we studied were specific persons the object of a premeditated attack. Only one per cent of the events were classical riots, and in .3 per cent violence was aimed at random targets. (The role and incidence of violence in the various stages of the protest cycle will be analysed in greater detail in Chapter 12.)

IV TACTICAL CREATIVITY AND DISRUPTION

When people remember a cycle of protest, their memories and emotions often condense different experiences and phases. For example, although we have seen that violence did not become significant until the final phase of the cycle, some observers recall the entire period as a time of riot, bombings, and terrorism. Others conflate the student movement of 1967–8 with the wave of industrial conflict in 1968–70. Still others have conflated these movements with the 'new' social movements of the mid-1970s—the peace, environmental, and women's movements. And for some, they are all absorbed in the nightmare of violence that Italy suffered during the late 1970s.

The 'Moment of Madness'

Popular memories do not always deceive. When people remember the years around 1968 as the peak of the cycle they seize on an elementary truth. The declining institutionalization of protest that our tables and graphs have shown from 1966 to 1968 not only demonstrates that mobilization was in full swing long before the French May; these years also corresponded to a moment of collective enthusiasm, tactical creativity, and attempts to gain popular participation in institutions and organizations.

Collective enthusiasms are not easily conveyed by statistical data. But even the dry data of the newspaper analysis communicates the intensive character of the mass movements from 1967 to 1969. We can see this in two ways: first, in the tactical creativity of the protesters and, second, in the disruptiveness of their actions. The statistical support for both of these findings is found in Figures 3.3 and 3.4.

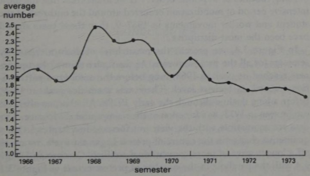

Fig. 3.3 Action forms per event, 1966–73.

Figure 3.3 plots the average number of tactical forms that were observed in each protest event for each semester for 1966–73. The graph shows that tactical versatility rose very rapidly during the early years of the cycle and declined slowly thereafter, in contrast to the total number of events, which reached their peak only in 1971. Putting together the results of Figure 3.3 with those of Table 3.1 shows that, as the presence of known organizations was declining, people were learning to use more and more varied forms of collective action. Then, as institutionalization increased, tactical versatility declined.

The occupations in the universities were the archetypical example of tactical innovation. For, within the occupation, working groups were organized, newsletters were run off, assemblies were organized, and classes were held.[16] But in the factories, too, 1968–9 were years of tactical innovation. Workers co-ordinated work stoppages, they organized marches around the factory yard, invented chants and slogans, and 'practiced the objective' they were seeking. Some people have remembered the period as one of spontaneity; but like that of the American Civil Rights movement (McAdam 1983), it was also one of organizational and tactical innovation.

Disruptiveness reached its peak at the same time. We can gain some sense of the disruptiveness of the protests of 1967–9 by adding the number of tactical forms used in each event and assigning a weight to each form according to its disruptiveness to others, to ongoing routines or to public order.[17] If we are correct that the most intensive period of mobilization occurred around the outbreak of the student and worker movements in 1967–9, then these years should have been the most disruptive.

In Figure 3.4, we present the mean level of disruptiveness by semester for all the protest events. As the figure shows, disruptiveness reached its peak in 1968, long before the *amount* of participation reached its highest level. There was a smaller peak in 1969, before a long decline through the early 1970s. Another, smaller rise can be seen in 1973, as a function of the rising spiral of violence. The data are compatible with the view put forward in Chapter 1 that a qualitative change in the nature of protest began the cycle, touching off a longer wave of more conventional conflict. Comparing Figure 3.4 with the parabola in the number of protest events in Figure 3.1 confirms that impression. The 'moment of madness' of 1967–9 triggered a long, but far more institutionalized cycle of protest.

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[16] For an excellent description, see Lumley (1983).

[17] Each form of action was given a base value of 1 and then weighted according to its estimated degree of disruption to others. Petitions, delegations, and assemblies were weighted only 1 (i.e. given no additional weight); strikes, public marches, and meetings were weighted 2; occupations, obstruction, and forced entry were weighted 3; property damage or theft was weighted 4; and deliberate violent encounters were weighted 5. Of course, other things being equal, the level of disruptiveness rose with the number of distinct forms of action used in the same event.

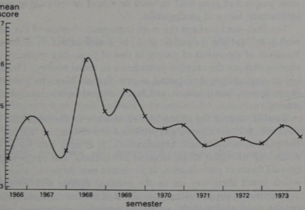

FIG. 3.4 Mean disruptiveness of all protest events, 1966–73.

CONCLUSIONS

Although a clearer picture of the different phases of the Italian protest cycle will only emerge from the cases we shall analyse in Parts Two and Three, the parabola of collective action examined in this chapter has already shown some clear directions. The period was disruptive, disorderly, and often violent, but most of the protests took classical forms of democratic public expression. Others were new, unexpected, and more disruptive, and some were violent. However, the intensive peak of mobilization lasted only from 1967 to 1969. After that, the magnitude of protest continued to rise until 1971, but by that time it was more organized, less disruptive, and was already coming back under the control of organizations.

Although it is easy to see why violence would remain burned in people's memories long after peaceful protest was forgotten, purposively violent actions were in a distinct minority of the forms of disruption used. Only towards the end of the period, when both conventional and confrontational protest had declined, did violence significantly increase. The wave of disruptive mass protest rose quickly and peaked early; by the time violence became prominent, most people had gone back to work or school or were using more institutional forms of participation.

The first—and perhaps the most important—feature of the protest cycle was the intensive peak of mobilization. It involved hundreds of thousands of people in one of those rare moments of rupture that are the creative parentheses in social history. Though not as immediately threatening as the French May, Italy's 1968 began sooner, lasted longer, and had profound political and social effects.

We shall analyse the effects of *il sessantotto* in the remainder of this book. It both reflected and produced new solidarities that led to the creation of movement organizations. It created new forms of action that disrupted elites, inspired participants, and put new life into old forms of participation. It generated new demands, many of which found their way on to the political agenda and into the programmes of the political parties. Most important, in demonstrating the vulnerability of the system to protest, it encouraged more quiescent actors in Italian society to use collective action. Though often using conventional means and seeking less transcendent values, these 'latecomers' challenged a wider array of opponents and placed a tremendous load on the state.

Finally, the cycle brought a new generation of people into the grassroots level of a political system that had not been renewed since 1945. Out of the early conflicts, new organizations were formed; the trade unions were rejuvenated by new personnel and by a new militance; even the parties of the Left—which had fallen from favour among young people in the peak of mobilization—were renewed by the influx of this new generation of activists. The mass movements that started the process expanded the repertoire of participation through the cycle of protest that they produced.

4

ACTORS, ENEMIES, AND THE STATE

Workers experience the factory, the speeding rhythm of the assembly line, the foreman, the spies and the guards, the owner and the paycheck. They do not experience monopoly capitalism. People on relief experience the shabby waiting rooms, the overseer or the caseworker, and the dole. They do not experience . . . welfare policy. Tenants experience the leaking ceilings and cold radiators, and they recognize the landlord. They do not recognize the banking, real estate and construction systems. (Piven and Cloward 1977: 20)

A Shipyard Closes

The old port city of Trieste is at the junction where three cultures—Slavic, Latin, and German—intersect. With its history as the main Hapsburg outlet to the sea no more than a memory and its natural hinterland cut off in Yugoslavia, the city survives as an outpost of Italian culture more for political than for economic reasons. In the local economy, the weight of the public sector is accordingly great—particularly in the shipping and shipyard industry that now retains only a vestige of its former glory. As a part of the conservative Friuli-Venezia Giulia region, Trieste is politically moderate, but here, as everywhere else in Italy, the maritime unions are militant.

In the mid-sixties, with shipbuilding becoming rapidly internationalized, Italian yards are suffering from over-capacity. In June 1966, in the midst of national contract negotiations, officials of the national IRI, who control the shipbuilding firm, Italcantieri, announce a plan to restructure the industry around a few key centres. As part of this plan, Trieste's Cantieri Riuniti will be merged into a larger unit with headquarters in Genoa and its San Marco yard will be closed (*Corriere*, 24 June 1966).

Two of the three major union confederations, CGIL and CISL, uniting across ideological lines in the name of local solidarity, call a general strike. Like most strikes over closures, it commands broad local support, extending from the yards to schools, shops, public transportation, and factories. A parade by the San Marco workers is followed by a public meeting in the centre of town to call attention to the city's plight.

Having demonstrated their strength, the unions meet with the president of the local chamber of commerce, the four governing parties, the city's parliamentary delegation, the mayor, the president of the region, and the top officials of IRI and Italcantieri. The delegation proceeds to Rome to meet with the Prime Minister, Aldo Moro (*Corriere*, 24 June).

This well-orchestrated, almost ritualistic sequence of events produces assurances that a solution will be found that will trim the shipbuilding sector without neglecting the needs of the city's workers. But by midsummer nothing has been done, and another general strike is called—this time led by all three union confederations and with even broader support from the local citizenry. This time, however, the ritual march and public meeting do not end in a genial encounter with officials but in a clash with police. Stones are thrown at the office of a local radio station which the workers feel has failed to give the protest sufficient coverage (*Corriere*, 2–4 Aug.). The government responds to the protests by suggesting a compromise—closing down the San Marco docks, but moving the Italcantieri office from Genoa to Trieste.

The government's manoeuvre gives the Triestini pause, but across the peninsula in Genoa workers, shopkeepers, and politicians react violently to the proposal. From late September to the end of the year, the militant Genoese dockworkers organize a series of strikes to demand the transfer of Italcantieri to their city as well as more economic help for its decaying economy. Here too the three union confederations collaborate, sending a joint delegation to Rome to talk with the government. Here too they gather broad social support in the name of local solidarity.

But Genoa is not Trieste: the dockers' well-run demonstrations and the citizens' expressions of solidarity quickly trigger confrontation and even violence as shopkeepers close their shutters, traffic is blocked, and young people clash with police. In one mass demonstration, 'Maoist' university students take advantage of the unions' march and public meeting to rampage through the downtown streets, breaking windows, damaging cars, and, according to the *Corriere*, stealing books. Arrests and a trial eventually follow (*Corriere*, 29 Sept.). The students use the orderly protests of more established groups as a platform for disruption.

Back on the Adriatic, news of the events in Genoa raises fears of the loss of Italcantieri. New strikes are held to remind the government of its commitment to keep San Marco open. But this time the conflict spreads beyond the shipyard and escapes the control of the unions. On 4 October some of the marchers in a union-led parade break away to interrupt the inauguration of a new school, embarrassing the Minister of Education, who is present. Like the Genoese, the Triestini are not above taking advantage of political opportunities. As the marchers pass the offices of a local newspaper, they throw lumps of charcoal at its windows to protest at its lack of coverage of the strike (*Corriere*, 5 Oct.).

These uncontrolled aspects of the strike begin to worry the CISL unionists and their Christian Democratic allies. When, on 9 October, the communist-socialist CGIL calls another strike, CISL leaders hang back, and there are clashes with police, traffic obstructions, and an attack on an ACLI office[1] (*Corriere*, 12 Oct.). As the government's indecision becomes clear, the enthusiasm and unity of the first phase of the crisis leads to divisions and violence. In the end, all is settled with a quiet compromise and the conflict sinks into the swirling currents of Italian politics.

Why introduce the actors in what will be a national wave of social disorder with a dispute in 1966 over the closure of an outmoded industry on the far boundary of the Adriatic? The case of Trieste and Genoa illustrates three aspects crucial to the cycle: the variety both of the groups that will participate in it and of their opponents; the role of competition between groups in the diffusion of conflict; and the importance of politics as its arbiter.

The shipyard workers were ordinary people with typical grievances. Through no fault of their own, they were going to be put out of a job and were angry about it. Assisted by their unions, they try to respond. In so doing, they invoke alliances, broaden the themes of their protest to territorial defence, and attack new targets. As the dispute progresses, it triggers opposition from others, which both widens the axis of conflict and directs it towards the state, where it is politically mediated.

Not all of these characteristics will be found in equal measure throughout the social movement sector. This is why a statistical analysis of a large number of cases is useful in balancing the case studies that have predominated in social movement research. Using both newspaper records and documentary sources, in this chapter we shall look first at the core social actors in the cycle—the workers and students—then at the secondary groups to whom disorder spread, before turning to some of the major axes of conflict between movements and opponents, state and society.

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[1] The ACLI is a workers' association affiliated with the Christian Democrats.

I STUDENTS AND WORKERS

The decade 1965–75 produced a rich and confused drama of action, confrontation, and political competition. This variety is immediately apparent in the range of social actors and groups we found.[2] Not only did the repertoire of conflict quickly expand from conventional to confrontational and violent forms, as we saw in Chapter 3; the social movement sector extended from the students and workers who began it to a variety of other groups and combinations of groups as the cycle gathered strength. Table 4.1 identifies the main social actors participating in the conflicts described in our newspaper data.

TABLE 4.1. *Occupational and demographic groups active in protest events as percentage of total events and of total social actors*

Social actors	As % of total events	As % of total social actors	Total groups
Youth	38.6	33.1	1922
Workers	21.6	18.6	1078
Not known	12.4	10.7	619
Public employees	12.1	10.4	601
Territorial groups	8.3	7.2	415
Educated middle strata	7.7	6.6	384
Independent middle class	5.3	4.6	263
Other occupations	4.2	3.6	211
Other demographic groups	3.0	2.6	147
Agricultural	1.7	1.5	87
Welfare clients and unemployed	1.5	1.3	76
Total	•	100.2	5803

• This total adds up to over 100% because of multiple group participation in some events.

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[2] Actors were held to be 'participants' in protests only if they took part in them physically; expressions of verbal or written support were not considered participation. This and other decision rules in coding and analysing the newspaper project can be found in Social Protest and Policy Innovation Study (1985).

They are listed in descending numerical order: the percentages in the lefthand column are based on their presence in the total number of events, while the second column shows how well each one was represented among the total social actors.[3]

The Students

Students and young people were the largest group in the social movement sector throughout the period, except during the 1966 contract renewals. They appeared in almost 40 per cent of the total events and constituted one-third of the social actors. As we shall see in Chapter 6, many of the students were participants in educational disputes; but they were also found in international relations protests, in urban conflicts, in protests on behalf of the working class, and, increasingly, in ideological conflicts.

Students were so central to disorderly politics from the mid-1960s on that it takes an effort to realize that they had been largely absent as autonomous actors from the public arena since the end of World War II, except in conventional demonstrations led by the institutional parties. As Italy entered the third decade after the war, each major party possessed 'mass organizations' for young people and for students, organized along classical frontist lines (Istituto Carlo Cattaneo 1968). The two main university students' organizations, the UGI (Unione Goliardica Italiana) and the Catholic Intesa Universitaria, were controlled by the three largest parties. As Lumley writes, 'the ethos of these organizations derived from the world of the political and cultural elite. . . . The politics of the active university students reflected those of the national Parliament' (1983: 162–3).

The upward phase of the cycle—in so far as it involved university students—can largely be written as their liberation from these old institutions. But 'liberation' does not mean spontaneous generation: when the new student movement began in the mid-1960s, it did not appear full-blown, nor was it independent of these organizations: it developed within and against them and was staffed by many who had grown up politically inside them, as we shall see in Chapter 6.

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[3] Our coders were told to be very literal in ascribing a social or demographic identity to participants; only where a social actor was clearly identified in the sources was an ascription made. For example, reporters who claimed that unknown protesters were 'delinquents' were ignored. Inference was used only when the group or organization that organized the protest was one that was known to be identified with a particular occupational or demographic group.

Pre-existing student organizations, long-standing grievances against educational institutions, and new student protest movements: these elements came together in a series of occupations at the Universities of Trento, Pisa, Turin, Venice, and Milan in 1967 and early 1968, and in a few key high schools—well before the French May was even heard of.

Three unusual features stand out in these occupations: first, the newly militant role of Catholic students, most notably at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan and at the new University of Trento;[4] second, the ignition of mass protest by political and policy debates—for example, by tuition fee increases, plans to limit access to the universities, and urban planning issues—and not by 'utopian' demands;[5] and third, the importance of 'technological' faculties—such as the architecture faculties in Venice and Turin and of the *Politecnico* in Milan—in organizing student protest.[6]

But the Italian student movement was not limited to these core universities, nor did it stay within higher education. It almost immediately spread to the universities of Florence, Rome, and Bologna and throughout the South and the Islands.[7] It spread to the high schools and vocational institutes, where the theme of anti-institutional protest was diffused and generalized into the rejection of the teachers' authority. Of the almost 1,900 student and youth protests found in our newspaper data, 270 took place in middle or high schools, 153 occurred in professional institutes, and only 143 took place in universities.

Figure 4.1 traces the numerical rise and fall of student protest in both the universities and the high schools. The first curve shows that the university student movement began in the spring of 1967, peaked a year later, and had declined by the autumn of 1969. The high school students began to protest in earnest only in 1968, and their protest activity extended into the 1970s. The university students were at the heart of the intensive early peak of mobilization that we saw in the last chapter, while the high school students came later and contributed much more to the rise of violence.[8]

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[4] The events at the Catholic University are treated in detail by Lumley (1983: 190 ff.) and are also discussed below, in Ch. 8.

[5] For example, in the first occupation of the Catholic University, in November 1967, the issue was the proposed doubling of school fees by university authorities. See *Corriere*, 16 Nov. 1967.

[6] The architecture faculty in Milan was first occupied in March 1967. Occupations of other architecture faculties followed: in Turin in May and June, and in Venice in December of the same year.

[7] The University of Naples appears remarkably often in the newspaper reports—'remarkably' because its student population, unlike that of Milan or Turin, had not been very highly politicized beforehand. The regional distribution of events with students mentioned as protest actors in the newspaper data shows that half took place in the Northwest, 6.3% in the Northeast, 13.3% in the centre, 25.8% in the South, and 3.9% in the islands of Sicily and Sardinia. Note that 75% of the Northeastern events came from the local pages of Milan's *Corriere della Sera*.

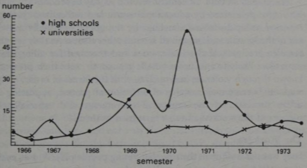

Fig. 4.1 Student protests in universities and high schools, 1966–73.

The student movement spread through antagonism, as well as through sympathy, as it quickly provoked moderate students and opponents on the extreme right to organize against it. This antagonism led to an early tragedy: in 1966, during a demonstration against the Gui law at the University of Rome, a left-wing student, Paolo Rossi, was clubbed and later died.[9] The incident gave rise to one of the earliest politicized demonstrations in the cycle, demonstrating the volatility of the university students and forcing the Rector's resignation.

Fractionation and ideological competition were not limited to the universities. Practically each high school occupation gave rise to a counter-demonstration of some sort. As early as March 1968, for example, when left-wing students at the elite Liceo Parini in Milan voted an occupation, 'the students who had voted against the occupation refused to follow their lessons and called a counter-occupation assembly' (Liceo Parini 1968: 6). Protest sharpened the lines between student groups, and this increased the disruptiveness of student protests.

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[8] An analysis of the relations between social protest and violence can be found in della Porta and Tarrow (1986) and in Ch. 12, below.

[9] See *L'Unità* (27 Apr. 1986) for one observer's description. The Rossi case unified parliamentary and new Left groups around the banner of anti-fascism—and it was not the only incident that would cause this reaction. See Ch. 12 for a discussion of the much more important case of Piazza Fontana in 1969.

The Italian student movement refused to stay in school. Students who were politicized by educational issues and radicalized through repeated occupations and roustings by the police eventually moved out of the schools and organized around other issues. As they left the familiar precincts of the universities and searched for allies, they were more likely to encounter hostile groups, to make their presence known through violence, and to clash with the forces of order.[10] The students became major agents of diffusion of protest, appearing in urban protests, in the ecological movement, and especially in support of the workers. Let us now turn to them.

The Workers

Italy was not unique in the role that young people played in its cycle of protest; but it was unusual for the number and intensity of working class conflicts. Industrial workers appeared in 22 per cent of the events reported in the *Corriere* and made up over 18 per cent of the social actors participating in the conflicts we found. These statistics should come as no surprise, given the conditions to which the working class was subject in the past. But, as we saw in Chapter 2, the divisions in the union movement, the speed of the economic miracle, and the 'national' strategy of its major political party had left them disoriented and disorganized. Except for the brief period of conflict that flared up in the early 1960s, there had been no major labour insurgency since the immediate postwar period.

An image that has survived from this period is one of spontaneous protest sparked mainly by unorganized young immigrant workers. But as Frances Piven and Richard Cloward observe from their research in the United States, 'protest is more likely to have a seriously disruptive impact when the protesters play a central role in an institution' (1977: 24), and this was no different in Italy. Although the unskilled workers would play an important part later on, the early impetus for the Hot Autumn was provided by skilled workers who had been politicized by the unions in past periods of industrial conflict (Pizzorno 1978).

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[10] This observation I owe to Enrico Ercole, who has analysed the university student protests on which it is based.

The cycle of industrial conflict was not the exclusive province of any one group. It involved workers at all levels of skill and experience, and was stimulated by both union and non-union militance in a few centres of heavy industry. Early successes in firms like Pirelli, Montedison, and Sit-Siemens alerted the unions to management's vulnerability and encouraged workers elsewhere. By late-1968 militancy began to spread to the unskilled and unorganized and to the conservative Veneto and the unorganized South.[11] Symbolically important were the wildcat strikes at Valdagno, in the Veneto, and the strikes in Avola and Battipaglia in the South, where the police fired upon and killed striking workers.

Tradition has it that the working class insurgency was spontaneous, but although much of it was generated on the factory floor the unions quickly become aggressive actors in the widening cycle of industrial conflict. And not only the unions: from the mid-sixties on, political groups like the Left-Socialist PSIUP, shopfloor committees like the CUB (unitary base committees) at Pirelli, and small 'external' groups with names like 'Potere Operaio' (worker's power) were trying to organize workers around the country. In the tight labour market of the late 1960s, workers had gained the leverage and the organization to challenge management, even where their union representatives hung back, as we shall see in Chapter 7.

Support for the strike wave was by no means unanimous. But even the workers' lack of unanimity and the desire of some workers to regain former advantages were major forces in diffusing conflict. We find in the newspaper data cases of unionized workers striking to reject the 'wild' actions of the newly-militant; of non-unionized workers striking for the right to work against union-called actions; and of white-collar workers staging 'catch-up' strikes to regain salary advantages they were losing vis-à-vis the manual workers. Competition was a major cause of the diffusion of industrial conflict.

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[11] Particularly important in the Veneto were the factory town of Valdagno and the large petrochemical complex at Porto Marghera. For a discussion of these cases, see Ch. 7. According to our newspaper data, 70% of the industrial workers' conflicts came from the Northwest, 7.3% from the Northeast, 6% from the Centre, 13.3% from the South, and 3.5% from the islands. The strikes reported in the newspapers were probably a small percentage of actual strikes, but given the tendency of newspapers to give disproportionate coverage to major cities and to their own areas, it appears to represent quite closely the proportional distribution of regional industrial conflict.

Conflict sometimes outstripped the demands of the unions. Workers frequently rejected the *delega* (mandate) of their union representatives, going beyond their wage and price demands to attack piecework rates and the pace of the production line. Though the organizational strength of the strike wave was largely due to the growing unification among the three major union confederations, its disruptiveness was in part the result of competition between them. As in the tug-of-war between Trieste and Genoa, competition was subtle and was seldom recognized openly, but, as we shall see in Chapter 7, the most disruptive strikes were those in which competing organizations participated.

II THE MIDDLE SECTORS

Workers and students were not alone in their mobilization. Public employees were early participants in a protest cycle that—precisely because of their participation—soon directly involved the state. Both new and old middle-class groups, particularly in the cities of the North, began to participate, after the students, workers, and public employees had shown that the system could be challenged with impunity.

Public Employees

Public employees make up the third largest group of participants represented in our newspaper data. Here the figures belie an image of a protest cycle fuelled by marginal people trying to overthrow the system, particularly when one considers that we have excluded from this category three important groups—railroad workers, industrial public sector workers, and university teachers—each of which more logically fits in another category.[12] The remainder—higher civil servants, public white-collar workers at all levels of government, communication, transportation, public welfare and other 'parastate' employees, public-school teachers, and municipal service workers—participated in 12 per cent of the events and made up 10 per cent of the social actors.

Conflicts involving public employees marked the first solid evidence that not only the poor, the marginal, and the working class

[12] Railway workers and workers in the state-owned industrial sector are classified as workers, while university teachers are considered as part of the educated middle-class sectors.

had grievances against Italy's model of development. Most public employees were politically moderate—not to say right-wing—voters. Widely presumed to owe their jobs to political influence and frequently denigrated by the Left as 'parasites', many had entered the public service under Fascism, and some even supported the neo-fascist MSI (Putnam 1975: 98, 110). The diffusion of the protest wave to members of the *borghesia di stato* did much to reinforce the impression of a society whose foundations were crumbling.

Public employees were extremely important in what Accornero has called the 'tertiarization' of the protest wave (1985)—that is, in causing disruption to the public—for their strikes could damage consumers, commuters, pensioners, and welfare clients. Tram drivers, customs officials, Finance Ministry clerks, toll collectors, and licensing officials may not be central to the productive apparatus of a capitalist society, but they can disrupt its daily life more easily than most workers (Accornero 1985: 28).[13]

Conflict sometimes also spread when the strikes of public service employees triggered protest by the people who depended on their services. The actions or reactions of these people also demonstrate how conflict could be politicized as it spread. By making a public outcry, they could focus attention on how strikes were disrupting their lives, thus bringing pressure to bear on the government to work out a settlement. Truck-drivers affected by slowdowns of customs officials could block traffic at the border; commuters delayed by railroad strikes could block platforms and tracks; medical patients affected by doctors' strikes could parade in wheelchairs. The government would have to intervene to force a settlement of these work-related issues when third parties intervened—which is precisely why they did intervene.

Public service strikes frequently escaped the control of the three major union confederations and, in fact, became a major stronghold of the so-called 'autonomous' unions (Regalia, Regini, and Reyneri 1978: 120). The result was that even after the confederations found it prudent to put the brake on their members' strikes, public employees kept on striking. The disruptive power of the autonomous unions in

[13] They may also be more visible because the newspapers gave them space in attempting to keep readers up-to-date on which public services would or would not be available when they went off to work, school, or vacation. Strikes against the public services, for example, are reported more frequently in the local section of the *Corriere della Sera* than in the national news.

the public sector illustrates how a middle-class 'tail' can wag a lower-class 'dog' in a protest cycle. Although the left-wing confederal unions tried to control the strike wave quite early, the *autonomi* continued to strike as long as they liked, incidentally churning up anti-strike feeling against the Left and the confederations.

The Educated Middle Class

The educated, white collar and professional middle strata doubled as a proportion of the active population between 1951 and 1971 (Sylos-Labini 1975) and occupied key roles in the new service economy—especially in northern Italy, where the workers were also concentrated. Their social aspirations, economic power, and dissatisfaction with the slow pace of Italy's civic modernization produced a large number of strikes and demonstrations.

These educated middle-class groups—professionals, semi-professionals, and white-collar employees—participated in 8 per cent of the protests in our newspaper data and represented 7 per cent of the social actors. Three particular occupational groups appear most frequently: doctors, many of whom had to deal with Italy's lumbering public health bureaucracy; bank employees; and teachers in both schools and universities.

Middle-class protest overlapped with and took some of its force from the strike wave in the factories. For example, strikes by white-collar workers in large firms were frequently triggered by blue-collar workers' actions. But a few dramatic middle-class protests preceded the main thrust of industrial conflict: for example, the 1967 doctors' strike which practically shut down public medicine for weeks. This strike was directed primarily against health insurance providers, but its disruptive effect was felt throughout Italian society.[14]

Conflict between workers and white-collar management was common: more unusual was the diffusion of models of working-class behaviour into the middle-class. Although militant workers sometimes attacked the managerial staffs of their firms,[15] in a few firms, like Sit-Siemens, workers' successes inspired office workers to become truly radical (Collettivo Politico Operaio 1972). As Regini, Regalia, and Reyneri write:

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[14] For example, when we analysed the agendas of the public events prepared by the CGIL's and the CISL's organizations in Milan, we found that one of the first issues that led to public meetings was the doctors' strike and its impact on the working class; see Chs. 7 and 12 for analyses of the public events data.

[15] Lumley (1983: 407 ff.) relates some hair-raising stories of the terrorization of white-collar workers in the more militant factories. But most of the violence involved foremen, not white-collar workers. See also Regalia, Regini, and Reyneri (1978) for the relation between blue-collar and white-collar strikes.

> The conflicts (between white-collar workers and management) always began after a plant agreement had been made for blue-collar workers only which excluded them from any benefits, and they were led by medium-status office workers, often graduates, who were harder hit by the rationalisation of work than those already performing unskilled jobs.(1978: 109)

The Independent Middle Sectors

Perhaps just as interesting theoretically as the groups that appear frequently in the newspaper data are those which *do not*. Artisans, shopkeepers, and employees of small businesses, as a group, were found in only 5 per cent of the protests and appeared a bit less often as a proportion of the total social actors in an even smaller percentage. This sector is a mixed group of actors unified by the small size of their establishments and by their capacity to disrupt the public in its everyday activities. Shopkeepers in the retail sector, newspaper vendors, and taxi drivers are typical of those included in this heterogeneous group. They are the members of the 'independent petite bourgeoisie' that Sylos-Labini found to be sharply declining in numbers in the postwar period.

But their numerical decline does not mean that they needed to be inert or politically insignificant; in France, as Suzanne Berger has shown, shopkeepers made up an important part of the protesting population after 1968 (1984). The relative absence of this group from the protests in Italy suggests that they were protected against the economic and social turbulence of these years by their centrality to the DC's social coalition. It was only towards the end of the period, as governments searched for ways to increase revenues and reduce expenditures, that their interests were threatened and they begin to close their shutters in protests against government actions.

Like the commuters, these 'latecomers' to the protest cycle often protested against the gains made by early participants. For example, hotelkeepers and restaurant owners protested against increases in the wages of their employees and downtown shopkeepers closed their shutters to protest against 'pedestrian islands' that had been installed at the urging of environmentalists.

The urban middle sectors were part of the twitching 'tail' of the cycle of protest that kept it in motion long after militance had declined at its heart. As Guido Viale writes:

> In 1968, a union demonstration in Piazza del Duomo [in Milan] was full of 'white overalls' from Pirelli, 'green overalls' from Breda, maroon ones from Alfa Romeo, and blue ones from Innocenti. Now [after 1972] . . . they are outnumbered by the white coats of hospital personnel, the multicolored suits from the small factories, the round of typesetters, bank clerks, programmers and laboratory assistants—by 'workers' who are technicians and employees who have never put on a pair of overalls. (1978: 246)

III URBAN, REGIONAL, AND OTHER GROUPS

Class models of mobilization narrow the vision of both activists and observers of social movements. Table 4.1 shows that almost as common as public employees, and more common than the new or old middle class, were a variety of residential and territorial groups: people making demands for local or regional policy changes; neighbourhood groups seeking new housing or improvements in local services; the parishioners of local churches complaining about the condition of their churches or the transfer of priests; residents of one region or city fearing that another would steal their privileges. In their demands for civic improvements, for lower rents and utility rates and for improved public services, these actors gave the protest wave a distinctly territorial component.

Territorial Defence and Aggression

The violence and disruption in the Genoa and Trieste protests were only a modest example of the passions that territorial issues could generate. There were far more aggressive demands for territorial autonomy in Alto Adige advanced by groups with a distinct rightist flavour which seem to have enjoyed complicity from within Austria. Even more savage were the violent revolts of the cities of Reggio Calabria and Aquila when, in 1970, it was announced that the capitals of their respective regions would be placed in other cities. In Reggio, there was an eight-month stand-off between local insurgents and a virtual army of police sent from all over the peninsula to quell the disturbances (Malafarina 1972; Ferraris 1970).

These were not so much demands for regional separation—as had been the case in Alto Adige—as protests in the name of territorial defence. Indeed, both the Aquila and Reggio revolts were triggered *within* the political system when local politicians called for resistance. As at the birth of united Italy, Southern politicians were at their most demagogic when they could turn supporters' resentment against the far-off government in Rome. Although these protests were extreme, they were eventually 'put down' politically with the allocation of generous development packages.

But separatism or protests for regional autonomy were very rare in this heterogeneous country. It was far more typical to find territorial elements in a conflict between social groups or between local residents and the government over socio-economic issues, as we did in Trieste and Genoa. Social actors threatened by plant closings, unemployment, high prices, or natural disasters would organize territorially against other actors or the state. They formed local coalitions across class or political lines, using both institutional and non-institutional channels to publicize their demands and seek redress from the state.

Urban and Neighbourhood Groups

While territorial protest was more common on the country's geographic periphery, urban and neighbourhood protest was more typical of the North. Here too, although the protests were disruptive and the leaders were frequently extremists, the issues were concrete and most of the protesters came, not from specific social classes, but from the general population.[16] And rather than attacking abstractions like the capitalist state, they aimed at specific opponents—public housing agencies, private landlords, municipal bus and tram companies, and city planning commissions.

The term 'urban movements', which gave rise to an entire literature in the 1970s,[17] was really a catch-phrase for a variety of movements: for lower rents in both public and private housing; for housing of any kind for those without it; for reduced costs of electricity, urban transport, and gas; for improved services, ranging from traffic lights to day-care centres for the children of working mothers. The movements—especially those on the new urban periphery of Italy's largest cities—had a strong lower-class base, but as inflation bit into people's incomes and housing costs became prohibitive, they began to attract significant middle-class support.

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[16] Note, however, that urban protests were quickly appropriated and stimulated by extreme left groups and unions.

[17] See, for example, Boffi *et al.* (1972), Daolio *et al.* (1974), Perlmutter (1987, 1988), and the journal *Città Classe*, which began publication in 1975 and gave frequent coverage to urban movements.

During some of these protests, there were moments of savage confrontation between the urban underclass and the police, especially in housing occupations. But they were also occasions for coalition-building between middle-class reformers and lower-class slum-dwellers and among parties, unions, and tenants' associations. Like the movements for territorial defence, they too fed rapidly into the political process, as the associations that represented urban dwellers turned their attention towards municipal governments. The shift from confrontational tactics to institutional politics culminated in 1975, when the Left conquered virtually every large municipality in the country in the local elections of that year.

Neighbourhood movements sprang up around more dramatic issues as well: against religious authorities, as in the Isolotto parish in Florence that will be analysed in Chapter 8; in favour of neighbourhood self-government; and against the adoption of general urban plans, as occurred in a number of cities in the early 1970s. In these movements, the ideological thrust and technical expertise of former student activists combined with the concrete grievances and rage of ordinary people to produce a wealth of conflicts at the grassroots of Italian society. Their disruptive impact increased just as the movement in the universities was in decline.

Conspicuously absent from our data was a group that, given Italy's long history of agrarian unrest, we might have expected to find more often—farmers and farm workers. The fact that they appear in fewer than two per cent of the protest events reflects both the sharp decline of the farm population in these years and its political and social heterogeneity. The farmers' relative absence suggests further that rural interests, like those of the independent middle class, must have been well protected by the government. Certainly, Italy experienced nothing like the frequent 'artichoke wars', or 'wine wars' that occurred in France during these years (Berger 1972).

Welfare clients, retired people, and the unemployed—none of whose interests were at all well defended—also appear in only 2.1 per cent of the events. That protests involving these groups, which included state pensioners and the indigent, were not more frequent may reflect the fact that the period was not one of deep economic crisis. But it also indicates that they were not as well organized as students, workers, or the new middle class.

Women, The Secret Agents of Protest

Women college students had been frequent participants in the university student movements of 1967–8, where they occupied a subaltern role and were disparagingly referred to as 'angels of the mimeograph machine'. As in the United States, many of these women became feminists in reaction to male hegemony over the new Left and have memorialized their experiences in memoirs and scholarly studies (Ergas 1982). The historiography of Italian feminism has been heavily influenced by the experience of these educated women.

Almost completely neglected in this literature are two more positive outlets for women's mobilization: the role that women, and particularly mothers, came to play in the neighbourhood urban movements of the 1970s; and the organizing experience that they gained within the trade unions. In the unions, although memories of former activists are full of negative images, the evidence collected by Judy Hellman (1987: 208–11) suggests a more balanced picture. Women actively organized a series of courses run through the unions, and in Turin succeeded in reserving a quota of new jobs for women.

But it was in the neighbourhood movements that thousands of women gained crucial organizing experiences and empowerment. For the very factors that limited their participation in other movements—the fact that they were wives and mothers—gave them crucial advantages. For example, in Verona, a group of Catholic women in an extremely conservative milieu reversed a city council decision (J. Hellman 1987: 147).[18] As for the tenants' movements, the prospect of a woman and her children freezing on the street for non-payment of rent was a powerful political incentive for politicians to find people temporary housing.

The importance of women's participation in urban protests is understated in the newspaper data, because the articles normally define social actors in relation to the grievances they express and not their social identities. Thus, a group of mothers complaining about traffic in their neighbourhoods, about their children's unheated schools, and about the absence of day-care were often described as a 'neighbourhood group' and not as a group of women. Religious protesters were described as *parocchiani*, obscuring the fact that a large proportion of them were women.[19]

[18] For good narrative treatments of the Italian feminist movement, see Ergas (1982, 1986). For geographic and movement analyses, see J. Hellman (1984, 1987).

[19] In analysing the Isolotto group (see Ch. 8), for example, I found that a majority of the regular participants in the group were women.

In a careful analysis of the newspaper data, however, Sonia Stefanizzi found that women were present in urban movements well before there was an organized women's movement in Italy (1986, 1987). The numbers are small, but Stefanizzi found something more important: that while women usually avoided violence (or, rather, that police were less likely to attack them than they would men), women's protests were much more confrontational than average. They were frequently involved in occupations and used 'the practice of the objective' to advantage to gain improvements in schools, day-care centres, and abortion clinics.

IV ENEMIES

By one of the ironies of scholarship, a field that is unusually sympathetic to popular politics has been heavily dependent on government archives. Because of police interest in protesters we know much less about the *opponents* of collective actors than about the actors who attack them. Police records are full of cases of peasants brandishing pitchforks and burning ricks, but provide little evidence about grain speculators. Sociologists can specify how many houses were burned and how many people were arrested in urban riots, but tell us little about the landlords who deprive them of heat in wintertime. These 'accidents' of record keeping are not wholly corrected by the public record, but analysing the newspapers with care can at least tell us more about the major axes of conflict than the usual government sources that scholars rely on.

Against what kind of opponents was the wave of protest in Italy directed? Was its goal to attack the capitalist system or the state? Were local and specific enemies attacked more often than general or national ones? Was there a crossover from civil society to the state as the cycle proceeded? Returning to those years through an analysis of the conflicts reported day by day in a national newspaper, we emerge with a very differentiated image of the antagonists of collective action, one that will eventually help us to understand how the Italian system rebounded so quickly.[20]

Specific and General Sources

Since strikes made up almost one-third of the conflicts we studied, management was the opponent of collective actors in the largest number of cases. Workers were the most single-minded social actors in choosing their opponents. Similarly, public employees seldom struck *except* against employers, although these could range from municipal bus agencies or local governments, to ministries, parastate agencies, or the government as a whole.

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[20] With the Tillys, I assume that people take seriously what they say their goals are in mounting a protest. 'We need not search for the "real" goals behind the "pretexts" for action', the Tillys say, 'or condescendingly substitute our own versions of what a group should have been attempting for what it said it was attempting' (1975: 281).

The professional middle class was more catholic in the targets it chose; while white-collar workers almost always directed their efforts against employers, doctors most often targeted the public health service, lawyers the judicial system, and teachers the educational bureaucracy. The independent middle-class and the urban movements aimed the largest number of their protests against local governments, while farmers and regional protesters most often took the national government as their target.

Least discriminating of all in the targets they chose were young people. While some 22 per cent of their protests were aimed at individual schools or universities, an additional 14 per cent were aimed at the national educational system, 12 per cent were directed at private employers, 10 per cent at local governments, 16 per cent at the national government, and the rest at a miscellany of agencies and groups, ranging from the La Scala Opera to the Catholic Church to foreign governments. If only because they aimed their protests in so many different directions, students were major agents of the diffusion of the protest wave (Lumley 1983: ch. 3).

How frequently were the enemies of the protesters general, and how often were they specific groups or actors? How often was their opponent the state and how often was it private employers? In order to answer these questions, we must first introduce a conceptual distinction between those whom people hold responsible for their problems—what we shall refer to as the *sources* of their grievances—and those from whom they demand a response—what we shall call the *targets* of their demands.

In many protest events, the source and the target of the protest will be the same, but in many conflicts, source and target diverge. The shipyard closing in Trieste illustrates the latter situation: the source of the grievance was the nationalized shipyard company that wanted to close down the San Marco yard and move Cantieri Riuniti to Genoa; but its main target was the Italian government, which could override IRI and keep the Trieste yards open. Including Genoa in the story makes the array of actors and enemies even more complex.

Were the capitalist system, the society, or the state the direct sources of discontent or—as Piven and Cloward would predict from their American experience—were the sources of the protests more specific and concrete: individual firms, landlords, professional associations, government agencies, parties and movements? Were people making over-arching demands against state or society, or group claims against particular political or economic actors? Table 4.2 summarizes the major answers yielded by our newspaper data. The table presents the major groups of both specific and general opponents which were judged to be the sources and the targets of the conflicts we studied.

TABLE 4.2. *Sources of grievances and targets of demands: defining grievance and principal target*

	Source		Target	
	%	No.	%	No.
None	—	—	18.3	860
A. Specific sources and targets				
Firm	18.6	910	17.4	817
Union or other group	3.8	186	2.5	118
Party/movement	19.3	947	3.0	143
School	12.5	611	12.6	592
Local government	7.8	384	10.8	506
Justice	8.0	392	6.2	291
National agency	11.1	543	12.3	575
B. General sources and targets				
Business, economy	5.3	259	4.2	195
National government	6.7	331	9.3	435
Foreign government	3.9	190	3.2	148
Others	3.1	152	.3	13
Missing data	1.5	75	5.8	287
Total	100.0	4905	100.0	4693

The first thing that meets the eye is the overwhelming predominance of *specific* actors among both the sources and the targets of the protests. Only 5 per cent of the events were responses to general economic discontent (e.g. business in general, capital, the economy), while another 7 per cent were triggered by the national government, and 4 per cent were directed at foreign governments' actions. In all, only 15 per cent of the protest events were caused by these higher-level or general sources of protest. In contrast, over 80 per cent were aimed at specific antagonists.

Clearly, then, although mass discontent touched almost the whole of Italian politics and society, the mass movement was primarily the expression of grievances that were local, sectoral, and immediate. Piven and Cloward provide an analysis of the sources of protest in the United States that is applicable to Italy as well:

> People experience deprivation and oppression within a concrete setting, not as the end product of large and abstract processes, and it is the concrete experience that molds their discontent into specific grievances against specific targets. (1977: 20)

State and Society

The second major finding in Table 4.2 concerns the importance of political and governmental antagonists in comparison to private ones. Using a simplified typology of public and private sources and targets,[21] we discover that 69 per cent of the sources of grievances and 57 per cent of the targets of demands are political or governmental. Political parties, social movement organizations, local governments, national governmental agencies, Parliament, the judiciary, and the national state as a whole were the sources or targets of protesters far more often than individual firms, industrial associations, unions, churches, or other collectivities in civil society. Although protest was based on ordinary people's grievances and was most often aimed at specific and concrete opponents, the frequency of these public sources means that it frequently involved questions of political power.

The targets of the protests, like their sources, were also overwhelmingly concrete, specific and, for the most part, political or governmental. But there is an important difference between the sources of people's grievances and the targets of their demands: a significant proportion of the protests—over 18 per cent—were 'issueless'. In these conflicts, although each protest had a source, no specific demand was made on any visible target.

Every protest has a source, but not every one has a target. Workers attacking management would often refuse to come up with negotiable demands. Women trying to establish the legitimacy of feminism might dress up as witches and march through the streets. Young

[21] We simplified by including all schools and universities in the 'public' sector and both publicly-owned and private firms in the 'private' sector. Most schools and universities in Italy *are* public, and public firms must compete in the market. Shifting public firms into the public sector changes the results only marginally.

people with long hair would protest for the right to be *capelloni* and to be left alone. Small ideological groups would attack others to establish their own identities and deny others the right to exist. Issueless protests attracted hostility or derision, but they were not mindless; they were part of a process of identity formation and establishment of political space.[22] They appear to have been widespread in the Italian protests.

Crossing Boundaries

Some observers have described Italy as suffering from a weak development of civil society, while others have been equally convinced of the weakness of its state. But the terms 'weak' and 'strong' in relation to state and society are relative (they are particularly relative to each other). Where contending groups cross the boundary from society to state, it may mean either that the former is too weak to resolve its problems or that the latter is more vulnerable to pressure from below. Whichever logic is correct, our findings show that such transfers from societal conflicts to the state were remarkably rare.

TABLE 4.3. *Typology of conflicts: all protest events, strikes, and non-strikes*

Type of protest	All events		Strikes		Non-strikes	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Issueless	840	18.0	33	1.7	807	29.5
Civil society-centred	1659	35.5	998	51.5	661	24.2
State-centred	1853	39.3	762	39.3	1073	39.2
Crossover to state	192	4.1	105	5.4	87	3.2
Crossover to society	57	1.2	18	0.9	39	1.4
Other	90	1.9	21	1.1	69	2.5
Total	4673	100.0	1937	99.9	2736	100.0

By combining the sources of the grievances and the targets of the demands made, Stefanizzi and Tarrow constructed a summary picture of the axes of conflict during the late 1960s and early 1970s

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[22] Pizzorno (1978: 284) has observed of the cycle of industrial protest that it gave rise to a number of actions in which no specific claims were made. He writes, 'Conflicts . . . tend to become ends in themselves (and in extreme cases, it can happen that no specific demands are presented) and do not depend on the process of negotiation, because the real goal that is sought is the recognition of the group's new identity, which is not negotiable for it constitutes the *premise* of negotiation.'

(1989). This simple typology allowed us to ask: in how many cases did private actors with grievances against other private actors fight out their conflicts in civil society and how often did such people transfer their demands to political or governmental targets?

The resulting typology is presented in Table 4.3, which analyses three categories of events: first, the total number of conflicts; then those in which strikes occurred; and finally those in which there was no strike.

Issueless protests

As we saw above, 18 per cent of the protests had no discernible policy targets. The difference between strikes and non-strikes is particularly instructive here. There were a substantial number of issueless protests in the non-strike events, but almost none in the strikes. Strikers know what they want and almost always know from whom to demand it. But in almost 30 per cent of the *non*-strikes, there was no specific target for the demand.

Civil society-centred conflicts

Twice as many cases are found In the second category—conflicts that began and ended in civil society—as in the first one. Strikes were aimed at private sources and had private targets in a majority of cases, but only in a *bare* majority. When we exclude the strikes, fewer than a quarter of the events had both private sources and private targets. The relatively few appearances of the private sector in the grievances and demands of non-strikers is a reminder of the importance of the state as both the source of grievances and as the target of demands.

State-centred conflicts

The importance of the state is more directly evident in the third category, which contains almost 40 per cent of the conflicts. This is not surprising, given the high proportion of civil servants we found among the social actors. Almost 40 per cent of the strikes were of this type. More significant, however, is the high proportion of *non*-strike events that had both grievance sources and targets entirely in the state sector. In a society in which a large proportion of decisions is made politically, both strikers and other groups identify their grievances and launch their demands within the state.

Crossover to the state

But if the state was the target of many conflicts that begin in the state sector, it was only rarely the target of conflicts that began in civil society. 'Crossovers' from the private to the public sector were almost equally rare among strikes and non-strike events. This finding may reflect an unsuspected capacity of Italian civil society for self-regulation, or it may reflect the fact that so many conflicts are *already* based on grievances against public or political actors that there is not much room for a shift from private sources to public targets.

Crossover to civil society

Finally, there were almost no cases in which grievances against state actors were transferred to the private sector for solution.

Thus the oppositions between actors and enemies were not only specific and concrete: they had two separate axes— one within civil society and the other in the state sector—as well as a third major type, issueless protests, which—except for repression—could not easily lead to concrete results. 'Crossing over' from civil society to the state was rare and the opposite route was almost non-existent. The state was a prolific generator of conflicts that were fought out within the state sector, but so was civil society.

V CHANGING ITINERARIES OF CONFLICT

Did this picture change significantly in the course of the protest cycle? We can divide this question into two parts: first, was there a progressive decline in conflict in civil society and an increase in state-centred ones? Second, and related to this, did more and more people 'cross over', taking their demands increasingly to the state as the capacity of civil society for dealing with their demands broke down?

Society and state-centred conflicts

The answer to the first question is provided in Figure 4.2, which shows a striking parallelism in the civil society and state conflict axes over the eight-year period. Only in the second half of 1968 and in the first half of 1970 did the two curves divide, and in opposite directions. For the remainder of the period, civil society-centred conflicts and state-centred ones rose and fell in remarkably parallel sequence.

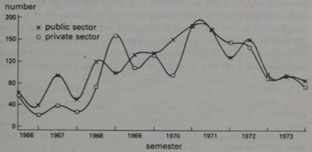

FIG. 4.2 Conflicts in the private and public sectors, 1966–73.

'Crossover' to the state

The answer to the second question is provided in Figure 4.3. In this graph, for each semester we have plotted the proportion of the events in which grievances that arose in civil society were turned into state-centred demands. Figure 4.3 indicates a shift over time towards the politicization of private sector grievances, but it is not significant until the very end of the period, when there was a sharp upturn in the number of protests that began in the private sector and turned to the state for resolution.

Something else changed in the course of the cycle. Even though mass protest had already declined in the early 1970s, as we saw in Chapter 3, the newspapers communicate an air of increasing impatience and exasperation. Why was this? The answer seems to lie in what we have called 'issueless protests'. Even as mass mobilization was declining, many had grievances that—because they entailed no concrete demands on anyone, but rather opposition to other people—were likely to become violent, as did those in the black ghettos of the United States in the late 1960s. They frequently led to clashes with the police or with other groups. Figure 4.3 shows that there was a sharp increase in such protests over time.

What is the meaning of this sharp upturn in issueless protests? We shall examine them in greater detail when we turn to violence in Chapter 12. For now, it is enough to point out that the rise in issueless protest coincided with both a decline in working class militance and with the appearance of a large number of new social movement organizations competing for support among urban youth. As collective action lost its mass base, conflict over issues was being replaced by conflict over ideology, organized by movement organizations that had little to offer people but their militance. This gave an impression of a society in collapse even as mass mobilization was declining.

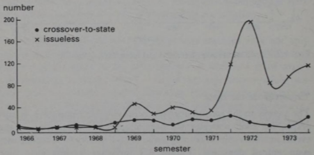

FIG. 4.3 Crossover-to-state and issueless protests, 1966–73.

The Changing Social Movement Sector

Thus the data on the groups involved in conflicts illuminate the particular contribution of workers and students, undercut the hypothesis that declining groups were numerically important, show how the role of the middle strata and urban groups grew, and underscore, above all, the importance of politics. Figure 4.4 presents the total number of protests in which young people, workers, the educated middle sectors, and territorial groups, both urban and regional, appeared for each semester in 1966–73. It shows how the composition of the social movement sector broadened during the end of the 1960s, continued to expand across the turn of the decade, and contracted as the period ended.

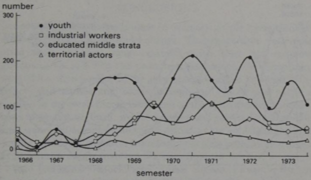

FIG. 4.4 Presence of different groups of actors in protest events, 1966–73.

Figure 4.4 verifies that young people were both early participants and the most consistently present in protests, and that workers—who appear somewhat later—were present for almost as long.[21] The educated middle strata and territorial groups' participation grew more slowly and peaked only in 1971. During the intensive peak of mobilization in 1967–9, workers and students were the major participants, but by 1970–1, when the number of protests peaked, they had been joined by virtually every social group in Italian society.

Although protest was widespread and was often violent, its disruptiveness varied widely. We have already learned (see Figure 3.4) that general disruptiveness peaked in 1968. Except for the high school students, it steadily declined after that, even as the total number of protests increased. Figure 4.5 shows not only that disruptiveness varied from group to group, but that the workers' declined sharply from 1969 on and the students' did likewise after 1970. Territorial protest was only very disruptive at the beginning of the period (when it was dominated by bombings in Alto Adige), while the protests of the educated middle strata were least disruptive of all. By the end of 1971, the disruptiveness of most of the social movement sector had declined to something like its level in 1966.

[21] There would be another wave of industrial conflict in the mid-1970s. For these data see Franzosi (1988).

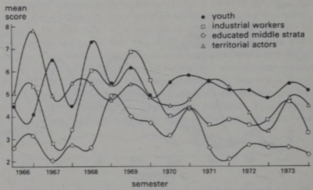

FIG. 4.5 Mean disruptiveness scores of different groups of actors, 1966–73.

We shall deal specifically with several of these major groups in later chapters. Some groups' protests—like those of white-collar workers and civil servants—were never very disruptive. They seldom used more than one form of action, usually a conventional strike or demonstration, and violence seldom occurred in their demonstrations. Others—like the university students—were much more disruptive, but their most disruptive period ended by 1968, and violence was less common in their protests than in the cycle as a whole (see Chapter 6). Still other protests, like those of the workers, were most disruptive in 1968–9, but as the new industrial relations system came into force, their disruptiveness sharply declined (see Chapter 7). Even the street violence that grew up towards the end of the period took the form, not of disrupting the economy or the public, but of hit-and-run strikes against other groups or movements.[24] Italian state and society were faced by rolling waves of mass disruption between 1966 and 1973. But the system never had to face a tidal wave of disruption coming from all directions at once.

[24] The scores of each major social actor on the index of disruptiveness show a large variation around the national mean of 4.53. Shopkeepers' (3.14) were lowest of all, although public employees, with 3.24, and private white-collar workers, at 4.14, were not much higher. Workers' disruptiveness (4.46) was closest to the national average, except for those who protested against unemployment. Their protests were significantly more disruptive (5.46). By far the most disruptive groups were young people, with an overall score of 5.58; urban and regional protesters, with a combined score of 5.51; and the unemployed, with a score of 9.58.

CONCLUSIONS

Social conflict had its main bases in ordinary people living through economic transition and social change. Their opponents were most often those at close range against whom they had concrete grievances—people like the protesters themselves, the firms they worked for, their landlords, the government agencies responsible for policy, and parties and social movements. Protest was often a weapon of the weak (Scott 1986), but as the cycle unfolded and the costs of protest declined, it became more and more a tool of people who were well-organized and well-placed to use it. Although there was no significant crossover from society to state in the course of the cycle, protest deeply involved the state from the start.

Two preliminary conclusions can be offered. First, the Italian protest wave owed at least part of its explosive quality to the fact that it was neither primarily political—as was the case in the United States, where economic conflict was muted through most of the 1960s—nor primarily economic—as was the case in Great Britain, where industrial relations became unusually conflictual during this period. Nor was it, except at the beginning, mainly centred in educational institutions. Disorder came from all these sectors of Italian society, but—like Italian life in general—it was centred in the political arena. This would give political mediation a key role in its reversal.

5

CLAIMS AND COUNTERCLAIMS

A Flood

Florence, November 1966. Rain for three days in the valley of the Arno. In the mountains of the Casentino where the stream rises, there are troublesome signs—a bridge collapsing here, a mudslide there. But in the valley, where the yellow water rushes past the ancient bridges, the authorities counsel calm. No extraordinary provisions have been made to prevent the river from overflowing its banks and no one has told the residents of the dangerous low lying districts where thousands of shopkeepers and artisans live to leave their homes.

4 November. The city awakens to learn that the Arno has overflowed its banks. The popular quarters —Santa Croce, San Niccolò, Santo Spirito—are covered by a dirty yellow tide, in some places up to the second story of the buildings. The piazza, the cloister, and the elegant Pazzi chapel of Santa Croce are a sea of mud. The flood has no architectural taste: the ugly pile of the National Library is as damaged as the exquisite doors of the baptistry.

5 November. Clean-up efforts begin, but the means and the manpower available to the Florentines are hopelessly inadequate. The arrival of help from international agencies is weeks away. The government in Rome announces the allocation of 'extraordinary' resources, but so far all that materializes are thousands of soldiers milling around in wet shoes with no one to tell them what to do.[1] As in all emergencies, local assistance is first organized by neighbourhood groups, youth organizations, and parish churches (Seidelman 1979).

6 November. The President of the Republic, Giuseppe Saragat, arrives to inspect the damage and comfort the Florentines. After announcing the imminent implementation of a complex emergency plan, he sets off to tour the most stricken neighbourhoods in a police van. Along his route from the prefecture to Santa Croce, he is met by flying objects, catcalls, and shouts of: 'Send us food and clothing, not presidents and ministers!'

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[1] One of the more practical early shipments was from the West German government, which sent several thousand pairs of boots.

La Nazione, the conservative local daily, is outraged at the disrespect shown the President. 'We hope that those who whistled at Saragat . . . will repent of their uncivil act and will be convinced that many things can improve—or even become easy—when the inertia and apathy that paralyse public life are overcome' (*La Nazione*, 7 November 1966).

La Nazione—as it often does—has varnished the truth, for Saragat was the target of more than traditional Florentine invective during his visit to the innundated city. All along his path through the flooded poorer quarters, it was rotting vegetables and stinking mud that people threw at his cavalcade. His message to Rome: 'Send help quickly!'

Christmas in Milan

21 December 1968. In Piazza del Duomo, which surrounds the vast gothic Cathedral, holiday crowds surge and bustle. Christmas lights frame the arcades where shoppers emerge from the soaring Victor Emmanuel gallery to the elegant shops. Ragged chestnut vendors, warming their hands over charcoal braziers and stamping their feet, contrast vividly with the furred and topcoated Milanese bourgeoisie doing its Christmas shopping.

Suddenly there is a tumult in front of the luxurious *Rinascente* store under the arcades. A group of college students, inspired by a nationwide strike of department store clerks, has decided to demonstrate against the commercialization of Christmas. The students carry signs condemning the profanation of Christ's birth, and protesting at the way in which the store caters to the bourgeoisie while paying its sales-girls low wages.

An amicable discussion begins between the students and the guards that Rinascente maintains to watch for pickpockets. Passers-by stop to listen, while other young people from the *piazza* press into the arcade to get a better look. As the crowd swells in the limited space, discussion leads to pushing and shoving and a general melée erupts. As the sound of police sirens is heard, the onlookers scatter but the students hold their ground and wait to be bustled off to the police station (*Corriere*, 20–21 December 1968).

These two incidents differ fundamentally in the scope of the grievances expressed and in the breadth of the protesters' demands. While the Florentines only react to a specific situation, the government's failure to warn them of the Arno overflowing, the Milanese students protest about a general condition, the entire capitalist system. In attacking Saragat, the Florentines act spontaneously against a target who happens to be at hand; the Milanese deliberately choose a symbol of their city's wealthy establishment. Finally, while the protest in Florence airs a simple and immediate demand, the protesters in Milan ask nothing less than a change in the culture of capitalism. The two demands approach the opposite poles of a continuum that ranges from the concrete, the purposive and the reactive to the abstract, the expressive, and the proactive.

But the two protests *do* have something in common; they both begin with a concrete grievance—the flood in one case and the department store strike in the other—which fixes them both within a broader frame of meaning and interpretation. Though the flood is the origin of the Florentines' rage, their anger is translated into action by the unarticulated assumption that governments should produce services and not merely symbolism; and although the department store strike is the occasion of the Rinascente protest, it too is framed within a broader assumption, that humanity should not be defined by commodities. With varying degrees of self-consciousness, the protesters are applying general interpretative frames to concrete situations, thereby dignifying their grievances and broadening the range of their potential supporters.[2]

Some observers have seen the protests of the 1960s, or at least some of them, as an expression of social actors' attempts to establish or legitimize new identities (Melucci 1985; Pizzorno 1978). Others have been more struck by the overwhelming weight of specific instrumental demands which at times threatened to overload governments (Rose and Peters 1979). But each of these has focused on only parts of the picture: on young unskilled workers, highly politicized students, families without proper housing, welfare clients. What patterns shall we find when we analyse the grievances and demands of a large number of people engaged in a wide variety of conflicts? Will their demands approach the concrete and immediate end of the continuum, or its expressive and ideological pole? Or—as illustrated in the two incidents above—shall we find that people's concrete demands are set within larger interpretative frames?

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[2] The idea that social action is 'framed' by general interpretative visions comes from Goffman (1974) and has been applied to the study of social movements by David Snow and his collaborators; see Snow *et al.* (1986) and Snow and Benford (1988). For a related approach, which uses the language of 'ideological packages', see Gamson (1988).

To approach an answer to this question, in this chapter we shall survey the intended beneficiaries of the Italian protests we studied, the nature of the grievances expressed, and the scope of the demands made. We shall see that, while constituents, grievances, and demands were mainly concrete and specific, a few central themes were diffused in the course of the cycle from the high points of conflict in the universities and factories to a number of other sectors and population groups, sometimes undergoing radical transformations along the way. The two major themes are what we shall call workerism and autonomy.

We shall also examine how the structure of demands evolved in the course of the cycle: did they remain concrete and material from beginning to end, like the Florentines' protest against the flood? Were they more concrete near the beginning, becoming increasingly abstract as the cycle neared its end, like the Milan Christmas protest? Or did demands evolve from greater concreteness at the beginning towards abstraction and expressiveness as mobilization peaked, only to fall back again to a a more workaday level as it declined? These are the questions that will be raised in this chapter.

I SECTORS OF DISCONTENT

The structure of grievances and demands may be better understood if we first survey the main sectors of social and political conflict. The sectors towards which protests were directed are not necessarily limited by the social identities of the actors. Thus while the bulk of working class protests were in industry, workers also participated in protests in favour of lower rents, better housing, and social reform in general. Students were even more likely to go outside their educational concerns. One of the major characteristics of the cycle was that—in 'minding other people's business'—social actors could carry the themes of their own grievances into new sectors.

In the economic sphere, the major sectors identified were industry, agriculture, and private and public services. The main sectors of social concern were education, art, urban and social services, culture and religion, and women's and family affairs. Major policy sectors were regional government, international affairs, and law and justice. Purely ideological conflicts and demands for the overthrow of the government or the constitution were kept separate from these, unless they had a distinct policy component.

TABLE 5.1. *Broad sectors of protest events*

Sector	No.	%
Economic	1816	36.5
Social	1387	27.8
Policy	710	14.3
Antigovernment, anticonstitutional	28	.7
Ideological conflict	975	19.6
Other sectors	54	1.1
Total	4980	100.0

Table 5.1 presents the sectors of economic, social, and urban policy and ideological conflict into which the protests were classified, and the frequency with which they appeared in the main grievances in the newspaper data.[3] It should be emphasized that the data in Table 5.1 refer to demands actually expressed in protests, not to underlying ideologies or the 'hidden' agendas of those who organized them. In later chapters, we shall move beyond the newspaper data to attempt to 'connect' stated demands to the underlying programmes and strategies of organizers.

Of the economic sectors, industrial conflict appeared most often, although conflicts in the public services ran them a close second.[4] In the social sectors, protests in the educational sector far outstripped those in any other.[5] In the policy sectors, the largest proportion of events involved the judiciary or police, with international affairs running a close second.[6] Explicitly anticonstitutional and antigovernmental protests (e.g. those demanding the overthrow of the

[3] A protest could produce more than one grievance or demand. Although all grievances and demands were recorded and analysed, the data presented here are based only on what was found to be the 'defining grievance', the one to which the protesters gave most prominence.

[4] The main economic sectors and their frequency in the data were: industry, which appeared in 18.8% of the events; public services (9.9%); private services (7.2%); and agriculture (1.3%).

[5] The main social sectors and their frequency were: education, which was found in 17.8% of the events; social services (4.1%); urban problems (3.2%); family, women's, and religious issues (1.6%); and art and culture (1.2%).

[6] The most frequently recurring policy sector was justice and police behaviour, which was the object of 7.8% of the protests. The largest remaining policy sectors were: international affairs (4.2%); the environment (1.1%); and regional issues (1.1%).

government or regime, but not protesting about any specific policy) were negligible in number.[7]

Dramatically more common than overt demands for the overthrow of government or constitution were ideological conflicts which had no specific occupational, social, or policy content.[8] These incidents numbered nearly a thousand, more than the total found in even the industrial sector. They overlapped significantly with the violent events we found in Chapter 3 and with the 'issueless' protests analysed in Chapter 4. The people involved in them may well have sought the overthrow of the state or the capitalist system (we shall see in Chapter 9 that they came largely from extremist groups): but the protests they mounted seldom had this as their overt goal.

The overwhelming impression gained from Table 5.1 is that—apart from these ideological conflicts—grievances were rooted in the sectors closest to people's concerns, and were not a direct expression of ideological cleavages. This pragmatic character meant that few people were directly attacking the fundamentals of Italian politics or society; but because the number of protests was immense and their scope was broad, the cycle gave the impression that the entire system was under siege. Let us look at the constituencies involved, the types of grievances expressed, and the structure of demands made before asking whether Italy's problem was an 'overload' of specific and concrete claims, or, rather, a deeply-rooted rejection of the system.

II CONSTITUENTS

Were Italian protesters defending their own interests, those of categories of people like themselves, the broad and general interests of the public, those of other people, or of humanity? A provisional answer to the question can be found in the scope of the constituencies whose interests would have beeen served if the protests were successful. These constituencies could range from the people directly involved (e.g. workers in the paint shop at FIAT), to the categorical group of which they were a part (e.g. *all* paint workers), to a general group with which they identified (e.g. all industrial workers), to people other than the protesters or their associates (e.g. the oppressed people of Vietnam), to universal beneficiaries (e.g. all Italians, workers of the world, etc.). Table 5.2 records these distributions for all the protest sectors we studied. Because strikes are so frequently organized to represent the interests of specific groups, in Table 5.2, these are separated from other social and political conflicts.

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[7] There were only 16 explicitly anti-constitutional protests and 21 protests aimed at overthrowing a government.

[8] Ideological conflicts were extremely difficult to analyse for the nature of the conflict, since the incidents were usually brief, and the press focused on the forms of the conflict rather than the issues dividing the participating groups. We categorized ideological conflicts according to the dynamics of the encounter: 2.1% of the events were the result of the antagonism of one group towards another which ended in moderate violence; 10% were acts of political intolerance which ended in major violence; 4.3% were acts of violence whose cause could not be ascertained; and an additional 3.2% were verbal political conflicts that did not result in violence. These ideological conflicts represented 19.6% of the total.

TABLE 5.2. *Intended beneficiaries: strike and non-strike events*

	Strike events		Non-strike events	
	%	No.	%	No.
Particular group	27.9	548	25.7	744
Categorical group	60.8	1194	20.0	580
General group	6.0	118	9.0	261
Other group or individual	3.5	69	8.0	232
Universal beneficiary	1.6	32	8.5	247
Other responses*	0.1	2	28.8	835
Total	99.9	1963	100.0	2899

*Includes all responses in which there was no beneficiary or in which a beneficiary could not be determined.

We can immediately see from the table that, in both the strikes and the non-strike events, the majority of the protests were aimed at relatively narrow and specific constituencies. In 45 per cent of the non-strikes, only the protesters themselves or those in the same social categories would have benefited if the demands were met; for the strikes, over 85 per cent had such narrow and specific constituencies. In both types of conflict, protests were far less often aimed at helping general constituencies, other groups, and universal collectivities.

That a protesting group's constituency was narrow did not necessarily mean that its demand was modest or its behaviour was moderate. The demands of even the narrowest groups were often unreasonable, and their behaviour could be extreme. In one such protest, there was a violent encounter between a factory owner and his workers when he refused to take an American flag down from his factory roof; in another, typesetters on a newspaper closed it down when their paper planned to print an article critical of the unions. As Lumley observes (1983: 154), an underlying characteristic of the protest wave was its 'radical pragmatism'.

Even the narrowest of claims could trigger counter-claims. For example, when manual workers demanded equal pay with white collar workers, the latter often struck to re-establish their wage advantage. This led to frequent lecturing to the workers by the Communists on the dangers of the narrow 'corporatism' of disputes which did not take into account the interests of allied groups. However, the disruptiveness of the protests was generally highest when the breadth of the potential beneficiaries was greatest: that is, the narrower the constituency, the less likely was the protest to disrupt the public, other groups, or authorities.[9]

III THE NATURE OF THE GRIEVANCES

Modern protest waves are often associated with the image of aggressive and well organized insurgents demanding new rights and privileges—with social movements. In contrast, in past protest waves actors were more likely to be demanding redress for traditional rights that had been infringed—such as the right to pay only a 'just price' for grain. Tilly (1978), who has labelled these two types of protests 'proactive' and 'reactive', regards the latter as more characteristic of pre-industrial collective action and the former as more typical of modern social movements.[10] On the other hand, twentieth-century social movements are frequently based on people reacting against the loss of jobs or status.

A third kind of grievance, one that is also common in the history of collective action, is the competitive conflict between groups whose policy concerns are no more concrete than demanding that their rivals cease to behave as they do or to exist altogether (Tilly 1978:

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[9] The mean disruptiveness scores varied greatly by the type of constituency that would benefit from the protest: for those directed at particular groups, the mean disruptiveness score was 3.87%; for categorical groups it was 4.18%; for general groups 5.04%; for groups and individuals other than the protestors, it was 5.33%; and for universal beneficiaries it was 4.98%. The disruptiveness of the remaining protests (e.g., those for which a constituency could not be established) averaged 5.43%.

[10] Tilly does not claim that proactive protests have become universal, or that reactive ones have disappeared. He does, however, associate the former with forms of conflict, such as the strike, which have developed over the last century, and the latter with archaic forms, such as machine breaking or rick burning, that are no longer common in modern indsutrial societies; see Tilly (1978: 147).

ch.5).[11] A fourth kind is over rights or benefits that have been promised but not delivered. In a modern social state, particularly an inefficient one like Italy's, we would expect to find numerous protest activities arising from such broken or unfulfilled promises.

Let us look at the nature of the grievances outlined in Table 5.3 and at a typical example of each, to examine the distribution of these four types as they were interpreted from the newspaper data.[12] Once again, strikes have been separated from other events, this time because they are so clearly an institutionalized form of action developed for the expression of proactive demands.

TABLE 5.3. *Grievance types: strikes and non-strike events*

Grievance type	Strike events		Non-strike events		Total events	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Reactive	34.6	672	50.0	1472	43.9	2144
Proactive	56.2	1091	50.0	1472	36.7	1790
Competitive	.3	5	22.6	665	13.7	670
Implementation	8.6	166	2.4	71	4.9	237
Other	.4	7	1.2	36	0.9	43
Total	100.0	1941	100.0	2943	100.0	4884

Reactive claims

There are significant numbers of all four categories of grievances in the Italian data, but the largest number of protests was mounted on behalf of reactive claims; that is, demands for redress of grievances stemming from infringements on people's perceived rights or privileges.[13] As Tilly would predict, reactive grievances were far less common in the case of strikes (35 per cent) than in the non-strike events (50 per cent). But the high proportion of reactive protests tells us that—in late twentieth-century Italy as in eighteenth-century France or England—people frequently protested because the actions of others were having negative effects upon their lives or livelihoods.

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[11] Competitive conflicts could be seen in the *charivari* organized by youth cohorts (Davis 1971) or in the competition between *compagnonnages* in the French trades (Sewell 1980).

[12] Interpretation of such large and ambiguous categories as 'reactive' and 'proactive' is risky and complicated. Coding decisions about these types were based on the following definitions:

1. *Reactive:* A protest against a current of past action, policy, or benefit of another actor or agency which is seen to be against the interest of those protesting.
2. *Implementation:* A protest to demand the implementation of a law or policy that has been passed; of a benefit that has been promised; of a trial that has been scheduled; of collective bargaining that is on the agenda.
3. *Competitive:* A conflict between two groups either for a policy benefit or private advantage. There may be a definite competing grievance or demand involved, but the dispute may also be over the position, strength, or existence of the competing group with no clear policy or demand involved.
4. *Proactive:* A protest demanding new rights, benefits, or recognition for the group that is protesting or for a larger collectivity. (From Project on Social Protest and Policy Innovation [1985: 7].)

A typical example were the many strikes against plant closings, like the one we saw in Trieste in the last chapter. These were frequently well organized and highly politicized and would often involve other workers, shopkeepers, local civic groups, and students, as well as the workers affected by the shutdown. Sometimes they even brought owners and workers together in a protesting coalition, as the former had the same interest as the latter in gaining state intervention.

Proactive claims

Although the largest proportion of protest events originated in reactive claims, Italy in this period was hardly lacking in proactive conflicts—that is, coming from people who were demanding new rights or benefits. Indeed, more than one-third of the grievances we found were proactive. We shall analyse the composition of these demands in more detail below. Most of them will turn out to involve demands for institutional access, for group benefits, or for policy changes.

The most typical proactive event was the contractual strike in which unions struck to convince management of their power or the seriousness of their platforms. Additional strikes might follow at the plant or firm level, in order to gain additional benefits on top of the contractual concessions that the unions had achieved (see Chapter 7). Many strikes were also called to demand new rights, like the reorganization of production or the right of union representatives to be present in the workplace (Regini and Reyneri 1971).

Competitive claims

Competitive conflicts were less frequent than the other two types but were found in almost 14 per cent of the events. Gone are the rich and folkloric trappings of the carnival or the charivari; the iron bars of the street fight and the Molotov cocktail thrown into the headquarters of one's opponents have taken their place. Competitive claims were virtually non-existent in the strike events but constituted over one-fifth of the non-strikes. There was a substantial overlap between them and the issueless protests described in the last chapter.

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[13] Note that these findings are based only on the 'defining grievance' of the protest, i.e. that which the coders judged to be most central to the protest. When more refined analyses of all the grievances are carried out, there is a somewhat greater frequency of proactive grievances than we find here, but reactive ones are still in the majority. We also coded as many as three additional grievances for each event, when these could be identified. One grievance was enumerated in 77.7% of the events; two grievances were found in 13.5%; three in 4.7%; and four in 4.1% of the total.

Competitive conflicts would often be linked in sequence as groups outbid one another or engaged in actual physical clashes. A typical competitive sequence followed the tragic bombing of the Bank of Agriculture in Milan on 12 December 1969. For years afterwards, as we shall see in Chapter 12, both Left and Right organized protests and counter-protests on the anniversary of the bombing.

Implementation claims

Less frequent than these three other types were what we have called 'implementation' protests—demands that people who have made promises actually deliver on them. These were evident in fewer than five per cent of the defining grievances. They are clearly differentiated from the other three types because they are triggered by the inaction or bad faith of others.

It would be hazardous to conclude from the relative absence of these protests in the data that Italian governments always did their job promptly, effectively, and fairly. For example, earthquake victims from the Belice region of Sicily several times pitched tents outside Parliament to dramatize the delays and inefficiency of the government in providing disaster relief. But the relative rarity of this type of protest compared to the other three types suggests that the popular image of Italy as a country that was rapidly collapsing was overdrawn.[14]

Is disruption greater when people seek new rights or benefits, defend old ones, compete with others, or demand that promises be kept? Disruption was greatest when groups were competing for resources or for space and lowest when they sought new rights or benefits. Protests were more disruptive when people perceived that they were about to lose something—for example, when they were about to be laid off—than when they were trying to gain more benefits or the implementation of promised reforms.

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[14] This image has recently been questioned explicitly by LaPalombara (1987) and implicitly by Lange and Regini (1988).

IV THE STRUCTURE OF DEMANDS

In *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Charles Tilly introduces a 'polity model' for the analysis of collective action (1978: ch. 3). A key assumption of the model is that a polity is made up of contenders, who are in turn divided into 'members' of the polity and 'challengers', who struggle with one another for power. 'All challengers seek, among other things, to enter the polity. All members seek, among other things, to remain in the polity', Tilly writes (1978: 54). Contentious collective action is what challengers do to get into the polity and what members do to avoid losing their place.

These are provocative ideas and, like many of Tilly's observations, they regard collective action as aspects of a struggle about people's interests, challenging the older view of it as irrational. But these formulations also seem to reduce the variety of motivations to simply the desire to enter or defend positions in the polity, a reduction that is probably excessive for a pluralistic modern society.

Stimulated by the questions suggested by Tilly's model, we examined the demands that Italians made in the conflicts we studied. They were first divided into two broad groups: *substantive* conflicts over rights, benefits, and policies, and *expressive* protests over symbolism, solidarity, and opposition. In each of the two main categories, we identified four subtypes of demands, basing our categories on the 'defining grievance' of the actors, as it could be extracted from their words and actions.

For simplicity, these eight types of demand will be described by the kind of outcome that seemed to be desired by those who made the demand. The four substantive types I shall call:

Getting rights: protests by people using disruptive direct action in order to gain the right to participate in decision making;

Getting more: conflicts between people seeking direct substantive benefits and those who had them to give;

Getting heard: protests on behalf of positive policy objectives;

Stopping action: protests mounted to change an existing policy or stop the adoption of a policy that the protesters dislike.

The four more expressive types are:

Acquiring identity: protests whose sole visible purpose is to assert the existence or identity of a collective actor;

Showing sympathy: protests aimed at demonstrating solidarity with other individuals, categories, or organizations;

Getting even: conflicts between groups in conflict in which there is no visible policy or substantive claim, but opposition to others or what they stand for;

Getting out: protests aimed at the destruction or overthrow of the system.

These eight types of demand are laid out in Table 5.4. For ease of reading, strikes and non-strike events have not been distinguished, but where significant differences exist, they will be noted in the discussion below.

TABLE 5.4. *Types of demand*

Demand type	%	No.
Substantive protests		
Getting rights	3.5	173
Getting more	42.0	2071
Getting heard	5.7	280
Stopping action	7.6	374
Total substantive	58.8	2898
Expressive protests		
Acquiring identity	2.1	102
Showing sympathy	8.7	427
Getting even	25.8	1269
Getting out	.9	46
Total expressive	37.5	1844
Mixed types	3.7	184
Missing data	—	56
Total	100.0	4980

This table contains some important findings. Looking at the overall distributions of types of demand, it is clear that it would be highly reductive to reduce the protests to people's attempt to get into the polity, for fewer than four per cent of the protests were cases of 'getting rights' and fewer than six per cent were attempts to be heard in gaining new policies. It was far more common for people to be simply trying to gain more benefits (42 per cent), to stop policy action (7.6 per cent), or to strike out at others (25.6 per cent).

Second, there were far more substantive claims (almost 60 per cent of the total) than purely expressive ones. People used highly expressive *actions* when they made demands, but relatively few protests lacked substantive claims altogether. Moreover, the largest proportion of protests were made on behalf of people's concrete material benefits. This was particularly true of the strike events, over two-thirds of which were organized around substantive demands. (Strikes accounted for two-fifths of the total events.)

What kind of substantive demands were people making? Seeking new rights or responsibilities, demanding benefits and privileges, advancing favoured policies, or opposing those favoured by others?

Getting rights

Much of the journalistic literature of the 1960s emphasized claims for new rights of participation—for example, students' demands for participation in curricular and other decisions, workers' desires to participate in the management of their firms, city residents' demands for neighbourhood self-government. But although these claims were widespread during the intensive peak of mobilization in 1967–9—and we shall see much evidence of them when we turn to university students in Chapter 6—they were far from common in either the strikes or the non-strike events and—after their peak in 1968—they became inconsequential.

Getting more

Claims for 'getting more' benefits constituted the largest proportion of the strike events (68 per cent) and the second largest percentage of the others (25 per cent). Such claims could range from demands for incremental changes in pay scales to demands for guaranteed employment or for the construction of a new school. Their unifying characteristic is that they sought to benefit the protesters and those like them directly, rather than through changes in general policy or by overturning institutions or elites.

Often the claims made were quite radical, as when workers attempted to influence the organization of production (Regini and Reyneri 1971), or when students demanded an end to examinations. Substantive demands could also have radically egalitarian implications, for example, when workers called for equal monetary pay raises at all salary and skill levels or when extraparliamentary groups urged workers to demand a 'political wage'. Even concrete and material demands could have highly radical implications when they were put forward to implement broad movement strategies.

Getting heard and stopping action

Policy-related demands accounted for 13 per cent of the cases, with an edge for those opposing, rather than supporting, specific policies. Policy protests were more often triggered by opposition to the government's consideration of a policy than by the autonomous generation of new policy preference; such opposition was manifested, for example, in an extremely important series of protests in early 1968 against the government's pension reform plan. Policy conflicts frequently involved members of the middle strata, but a large number involved the trade unions, which launched a general 'strategy of reforms' in 1969.

Although policy-related protests constituted less than 15 per cent of the total, they had a more direct political effect than either of the two types described earlier. This is not only because they were aimed at policy-makers rather than owners or school administrators, but because they were more likely to use public forms of protest, such as the march or public meeting. And since they sought to represent the needs of general constituencies rather than the interests of particular groups, they were couched in broader interpretative frames which could become the bases for future protests and campaigns.

Acquiring identity

With respect to the expressive protests, we were able to identify only a tiny proportion—just over two per cent of the total—in which actions were judged to have been mounted only to express the existence of a group or to affirm its identity. The affirmation of a collective identity was an element in many protests mounted on behalf of substantive claims;[15] but the numerical scarcity of protests that were *about* group identity shows that people usually had a concrete grievance in mind when they went into the streets or laid down their tools.

The term 'collective identity' as it has been used in the social movement literature is difficult to grasp empirically. Often, a group's desire to establish its identity could be inferred from the unreasonable or non-negotiable nature of the demands it put forward (Pizzorno 1978). At other times it could be inferred from the wild or unconventional nature of its actions. But people often put forward unreasonable demands or use extreme forms of action only to establish a strong bargaining position and persuade their opposite numbers to take them seriously. Thus, even in these most expressive of protests, there was frequently an instrumental motivation.

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[15] Pizzorno's notion of collective identity, in which emerging identities are expressed through extreme but substantive demands, implies this; see Pizzorno (1978). Melucci's view is somewhat different from that of Pizzorno (1985, 1988).

Showing sympathy

Solidarity with others was a far more easily observed reason for protesting than acquiring identity. It constituted almost nine per cent of the total protests and appeared in identical proportions in the strike and non-strike events. Inspection of the data indicates that the largest proportion of these sympathy protests were either strikes by one category of workers on behalf of another, or were expressions of solidarity with those who had been arrested or were losing their jobs. Solidarity protests were a major mechanism for the diffusion of protest.

Getting out

Those who have seen opposition to the system or the state as people's major motive for protest will derive little support from our findings. Fewer than one per cent of the events in our data, which come from a source that no one could accuse of being soft on revolution, were aimed explicitly at the overturn of the capitalist system or the Italian state. Though many protests were animated by groups that made no secret of their opposition to the system, social conflict was organized primarily around people's interests and demands and against those who resisted them or threatened to do so.

Getting even

The most dramatic finding in the demand structure of the protests was the large proportion of direct confrontations between opposing groups and actions in which one group protested against the actions or existence of another: 26 per cent. Although these events were often aimed at other groups or movements, they were also frequently directed at decision makers, but with no clear reference to their actions or policies. These events are closely correlated with the 'issueless' protests and the competitive conflicts we observed earlier.

It is in this category that we see a major difference between the strikes and non-strike events. Only six per cent of the strikes were motivated only by opposition to other people. A group would strike to oppose other strikes of which they disapproved and, particularly later in the period, to express its opposition to violence or terrorism.

But among non-strike protests those aimed at other groups constituted fully 39 per cent of the cases, a higher percentage of the non-strikes than any other demand type.

Thus the demand structure of the protests—like their constituencies and the sources of the grievances—was mostly concrete, substantive, and specific. People sought new rights and benefits, supported particular policies and opposed others, or struck out at their immediate enemies, rather than at the capitalist system or the state as a whole. The politics of collective action were an extension of politics in general.

V BROADER FRAMES OF MEANING: AUTONOMY AND WORKERISM

But 'politics in general' is never *only* the expression of narrow claims and counterclaims. People cannot for long sustain campaigns on behalf of their rights or interests without identifying them with generally-held values and reaching out to others through a framework of common interpretation. A major feature of a protest cycle is that, within it, old frames of meaning can be extended and bridged and new ones can appear in one sector and be rapidly generalized to other population groups. These 'master frames' are usually defined during the early phases of the cycle among early participants and then become the common currency of coalitions of groups and movements (Snow and Benford 1988).

In Italy, two such interpretative frames emerged quite clearly in the cycle and could be found throughout its arc. The first, inherited from the old workers' movement but undergoing considerable change in the course of the period, is *workerism;* the second, which appears first in the student movement, is *autonomy*. Since both of these themes will appear repeatedly in the rest of this book, they shall simply be introduced here with a indication of some of the ways in which they will turn up later.

Workerism

In an anonymously published pamphlet that appeared in 1967, a Communist intellectual wrote:

> Only in the factory is the social relation of production that is going to be destroyed found in the same place as the class political force . . . that is able to subvert and overturns it: the mole that corrodes and the gravedigger that can undermine it. (Accornero 1967: 54)

Workerism—*operaismo* in Italian—is the sentiment that the needs of the proletariat are the proper fulcrum for revolutionary activity and that its elemental wisdom is the correct source of strategic direction. It has a long history in left-wing Italian political culture (Magna 1978) and can be traced to the struggle between syndicalists and parliamentary socialists in the early history of the labour movement and to the conflict between maximalists and minimalists in the Socialist party in the 1910s. It was well represented in a wing of the new Communist Party that was founded in 1921.

Workerism continued to exercise a fascination over the extreme left throughout the postwar period. The PCI succeeded in becoming hegemonic on the Left by subordinating its support for the working class to a strategy of a broad alliance of groups and classes. This left a stratum of labour organizers and intellectuals uncertain about the revolutionary authenticity of the major party of the Left and convinced that the lassitude of the workers could be traced to the party's failure to represent their deepest instincts. Even within the PCI and among some of its union cadres, workerism was revived as early as the mid-1950s (Magna 1978).

Historians have underlined the importance of workerism in the formation of the new Left in the early 1960s (Becchelloni 1973; Lumley 1983). They have shown how journals like *Classe Operaia* and *Quaderni Rossi* revived the old theory of worker centrality that the PCI was inclined to sublimate as it saw its political future in the 'productive middle strata'. What has been less appreciated is the stubborn survival of the same sentiment within the PCI and the unions, and its revival in the 1960s as the party's alliance strategy seemed to be going nowhere. For example, when Miriam Golden looks back at the postwar history of Turinese metalworkers, she finds an unbroken tradition of workerism in the left-wing culture of that city (1988).

One of the superficially surprising aspects of the university students' movement that began in the mid-sixties was its adoption of workerist symbolism. This symbolism began to appear as early as 1966, when sociology students at the new University of Trento theorized that the university is a 'productive institution' (see Chapter 6). The Trento sociologists' discovery of the early Marx was evident as they wrote that 'students are in fact "subordinates" who suffer a process of effective alienation from decisions which affect them' (quoted in Grazioli 1979: 15). By 1968, the Trento students were theorizing that the university is 'one of the productive institutions of the current social system . . . It produces a particular type of good: man as commodity, as a trained labour force or one that is in the process of being trained' (quoted in Grazioli 1979: 17–18).

Workerism was extended still further by a coalition of student groups who occupied the administration building of the University of Pisa in 1967 (see Chapter 10). Instead of seeing students as commodities, they saw them as workers, and deduced from this that they should receive a state salary. The theses of these students received national publicity when they were adopted by a faction of the UGI, the left-wing students' association, splitting the organization and destroying its credibility (Cazzaniga 1968).

Workerism became the common coin of the extraparliamentary groups that developed out of the crisis of the student movement after 1968 (see Chapter 11). It ultimately became a caricature of itself: comically, when the PSI, which had lost its working class credentials when it entered the Centre-Left coalition in the early 1960s, declared itself to be 'the party of labour'; and tragically, in the simplistic workerist ideologies of some of the terrorist groups that flourished in the mid-1970s (see Chapter 12).

In the hands of rigidly ideological groups, *operaismo* as a symbolic frame for action could prove a constricting sectarian cage, as it did for a faction of the *Classe Operaia* group that developed in the mid-1960s. However, in more imaginative hands, it could serve as a common frame for broader campaigns around the 'subjective' needs of the proletariat for housing, lower rents, and urban services, as we shall see in Chapter 11, in the case of another group, Lotta Continua.

The main importance of workerism was that it provided a framework of solidarity among the not-always-harmonious groups on the extreme Left. Its importance was more symbolic than concrete (no one seriously mistook the university students of Pisa or Turin for industrial workers), for it linked these groups symbolically to the great tradition of Italian revolutionary socialism. Its ultimate defect was that, when taken seriously as a guide to action, it placed narrow limits on the ability of the extreme Left to make alliances with groups whose interests and values had nothing to do with the workers but might have dovetailed with some of its other demands.

Workerism had an important strategic function for the extraparliamentary Left. Conservatives might scoff that sons of the bourgeoisie who styled themselves as workers were sporting the traditional blue work clothes of the proletariat. But they missed the essential significance of workerism: in a country in which the major institutional party of the Left had gained its hegemony by claiming to represent a coalition of groups outside the proletariat, those who wished to create political space for themselves to its left would need to frame their demands in terms that would have meaning in Italy's traditional left-wing political culture.

Autonomy

Workerism was a traditional left-wing interpretative frame that was extended to new groups and new activities, but the notion of autonomy imposed a new logic on what Italians called the problem of the *delega* (representative mandate). Although the theme of autonomy had international parallels—for example, in the concept of *autogestion* (self-management) advanced by left-wing Catholic unionists in France—it had particular importance in Italy, where the political culture was dominated by parties and their mass organizations to a much greater degree.

The concept of the autonomy of social actors from the parties and associations was an important aspect of the three protest movements that we shall encounter in Part Two: the university students, the industrial workers, and the radical 'base communities' within the Catholic Church.

In the university students' movement, where party-led associations had exercised hegemony over student organizations since the immediate postwar period, radicals gained a following by demanding that students have the right to govern their own organizations. The theme of autonomy was then broadened to include the students' right to organize their own courses and have a say in the governance of the university. And, eventually, the students' primary tactic, the occupation, would itself be conceived, 'not only as a means of exercising pressure, but as an instrument . . . for experimenting with new forms of pedagogy through collective action' (Grazioli 1979: 43).

In the workers' movement, autonomy had two overlapping meanings: first, the autonomy of the workers from the trade unions that dictated their platforms without consulting them; and second, the autonomy of the unions from their respective political party affiliates. While the unions were more prone to interpret autonomy in the second sense, the form of factory representation that they eventually adopted, the council of delegates, was open to both union and non-union workers. Although these councils soon came under the control of the unions, they institutionalized autonomy symbolically. Extraparliamentary militants in the factories would hammer on the theme of autonomy in attempting to contest the power of the unions within these councils.

Even in the Catholic 'base communities' such as the one we shall study in Chapter 8, the autonomy of believers from the Church hierarchy became an important unifying symbol. If the true Church, as many militants claimed, was 'the people of God', and not the Vatican hierarchy, then the bishops had no right to dictate the positions of parish priests, or even to demand that they instruct their parishioners in Church doctrine. It was this autonomous interpretation of Vatican II that led to the clash between left-wing Catholics and the hierarchy in Florence in 1968–9.

Autonomy was also a theme in many of the urban protests of the early 1970s, as tenants' committees tried to assess their own rents and rates, and began to transform themselves into neighbourhood councils. And it became a rallying cry for regional groups opposing the national government. Used in another way, it was the term that the largely middle-class 'autonomous' unions of civil servants chose to describe themselves, in order to designate their independence from the political control of the confederations.

Autonomy and workerism combined in the extreme Left groups that tried to contest the hegemony of the PCI and the unions over the working class. For example, the group called Potere Operaio that we shall encounter in Porto Marghera in Chapter 7 was strongly influenced by the workerism of the journal *Classe Operaia* and demanded the autonomy of the workers from the unions. The Potere Operaio group we shall study in Tuscany in Chapter 10 had a broader concept of both workerism and autonomy.

Of all the themes expressed in the Italian protest cycle, autonomy came closest to being a new 'master' theme comparable to the notion of rights in the American movements of the 1960s. At the high point of the cycle, in 1967–9, autonomy was exhilarating and liberating; but it could also mean sectarianism and isolation, particularly after the unions and parties began to reassert their control over the workers in the early 1970s. This meaning was predominant in the tragic history of the term in the mid-1970s, when a collection of miscellaneous clandestine and semi-clandestine groups formed what came to be called the 'area of autonomy.' For these groups, autonomy meant separation from the state, from the institutional Left, from the unions, and eventually from reality.

There was a direct link between the end of the cycle and this 'area of autonomy'. For by the years 1974–6, as we shall see in Chapter 12, mobilization had declined, repression had driven all but the most hardy off the streets, and many of the movements generated in the intensive peak of mobilization had been institutionalized. In the ultimate irony of the protest cycle, the banner of autonomy, first raised by the students in 1966–8 to call for grassroots democracy, was used to wrap a faction of the extreme Left in clandestinity and mask its acts of terror in a rhetoric that—however hard they tried—could not cloak its members' detachment from the masses.

VI SHIFTING AGENDAS

We have now established the necessary data with which to pursue our earlier questions about the dynamic of grievances and demands in the course of the protest cycle. Did the demands remain concrete and the constituencies narrow throughout? Did demands shift from concrete to abstract, the constituencies from narrow to broad, as the cycle ended? Or did the evolution of demands follow a parabola similar to the forms of action we studied in Chapter 3 and the social actors we observed in Chapter 4: from concrete and narrow at the outset, to abstract and broad as mobilization peaked, only to return to a pattern much like that at the beginning of the period as mobilization declined?

Sectoral Change

The changes in all of the major economic and social sectors present in the protest wave resemble what we found earlier about the main social actors: expanding from 1967 until the end of the decade, and beginning to decline thereafter. Exceptions were international protests and conflicts about education, which peaked early in the cycle, and two major sectors in which the peak of conflict came late in the period—ideological conflict, and protests in the area of justice, including complaints against police repression and judicial delays, and a series of dramatic prison revolts.

Ideological conflicts were the most headline-catching of these. Leftists and rightists would meet on the street and fight with chains and bats; political party meetings were interrupted and political clubs broken into by their enemies; small extremist groups would attend the rallies of their allies and radicalize them by throwing stones at police or breaking windows; rival marches would thread through the city streets, playing a tactical minuet with each other and with the police who tried to keep them apart. An important side product was the growing importance of the *servizio d'ordine* (demonstration marshals) of parties, unions, and extraparliamentary groups. Their official job was keeping demonstrations under control, but many of them became recruiting pools for violence.

The co-occurrence towards 1971-3 of the decline of protest in the major substantive sectors (industry, education, services, and international affairs) with the increase in ideological conflict constitutes a key finding of the research and cannot be emphasized too strongly. As people who worked in industry or services, who studied in the university, or who were concerned with international conflicts were returning to their desks or workbenches, conflict was spreading in the streets among those with no specific policy proposals but with a passionate hatred for their opponents. That this rise of ideological conflict as mobilization within the major substantive sectors was declining is graphically illustrated in Figure 5.1.

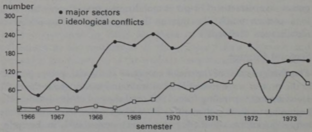

Fig. 5.1 Protest events in five major sectors and number of ideological conflicts, 1966–73.

The growth of protests against the police and the justice system in the early 1970s, as most other sectoral conflicts were declining, was related to this shift from substantive demands to ideological conflict. For as the number of ideological battles on the streets increased, the police began to follow a more aggressive policy of charges and arrests, inspiring numerous demonstrations against police brutality and others demanding the release of prisoners. And since the police seemed to be most energetic in repressing the extreme Left, there were protests against the protection that they seemed to be offering the extreme Right and suspicion of complicity between the security services and right-wing subversion.

Narrowing Constituencies

How did the structure of intended beneficiaries change in the course of the cycle? Did the constituencies represented in the strikes and protests remain narrow throughout the period? Did the group basis of protests broaden continually as social movements appeared and appealed to broader followings with more abstract appeals? Or did representation follow a parabola from narrow to broad and back again to narrow constituencies?

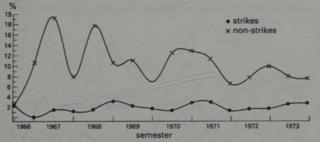

FIG. 5.2 Proportion of strikes and non-strike events in which beneficiaries are 'others' and universal, 1966–73.

Figure 5.2 provides a partial answer to these questions. It traces the evolution of the proportion of claims made on behalf of the very broadest constituencies—universal constituencies and groups outside the protesters' category—over the course of the cycle, for both strikes and non-strike events. In the case of the strikes, constituencies did not become visibly broader at any time in the cycle. Strikers predominantly defended their own interests during all the phases of the period, even during the intensive peak of mobilization. But in the *non*-strike protests, there was a definite correlation between the breadth of the constituencies and the peaks and valleys of mobilization. Protests on behalf of broad constituencies were most common as confrontational forms of action developed in the early peak of the cycle, but such protests had diminished by the end of 1968. The pattern hints at universalization of demands at the peak of the cycle and a specialization of constituencies at both ends.

Changing Grievance Sources

How did the overall structure of the grievances that led people to protest change over time? In Chapter 3 we saw that there was a high degree of tactical innovation and disruptiveness at the intensive peak of the cycle in 1967–9. When we turn to the number of grievances expressed in each event, we find an equivalent dynamic for both strikes and non-strike events. The intensive early period of mobilization produced an explosion in the number of demands expressed in both types of collective action. This can be seen in Figure 5.3, which traces the average number of demands recorded in each event for the entire period.

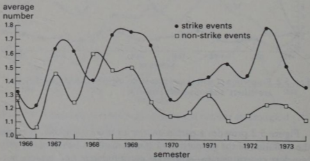

FIG. 5.3 Demands per event: strikes and non-strike events, 1966–73.

This figure shows that—as with tactical innovation—there was a decline in the average number of demands in the non-strike events after 1968. But it also shows that there was a revival in the average number of demands in the strike events towards the end of the cycle. If we examine the content of these demands, the reason soon becomes obvious. The increased number of demands in strikes held towards the end of the cycle was the result of the unions' addition of general policy proposals to shopfloor demands. The unions' 'strategy of reforms' never *replaced* the workers' concrete, material demands; they were simply added to the end of negotiating platforms.

How did the structure of demands change over time? Were people shifting from the defence of inherited rights (e.g. reactive claims) to demands for new ones (proactive claims) in the course of the cycle? From demands for new rights and benefits to opposing others (competitive claims)? Or from all of these to demanding the implementation of earlier promises? Figure 5.4 traces only the changes in proactive and competitive claims over the eight-year period, as the changes in the proportions of reactive and implementation claims were insignificant.

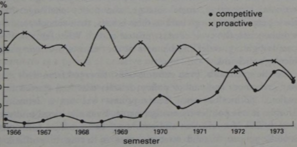

FIG. 5.4 Proportion of proactive and competitive claims in protest events, 1966–73.

Except in 1968—when they rose sharply as a proportion of the total—reactive claims (not shown in Figure 5.4) were a fairly constant proportion of each semester's events during our period, varying between 40 and 60 per cent of the total. Proactive claims also rose in 1968, to over 50 per cent of the total, but by the end of the period they had declined to less than 30 per cent of the total. In the aggregate, people did not shift from protecting acquired positions to demanding new privileges in the course of the cycle.

What *did* perceptibly change was the proportion of competitive claims. Only 2.2 per cent in early 1966, they had increased to over 25 per cent by 1973. Figure 5.4 shows that, towards the end of the period, while fewer and fewer people were demanding new rights or privileges, the social movement sector was undergoing a competitive radicalization as groups opposed one another with bats and bicycle chains. The early peak of mobilization had created an increase in the proportion of people claiming new rights and resources, but the end of the cycle produced an increase in competition over ideological space.

CONCLUSIONS

We can now summarize the findings of the last four chapters: Italians in the years 1966–73 were predominantly divided over distributional claims, and not over global ideological issues. Mobilization had its main base in ordinary people living through a time of economic transition, social change, and policy challenge. When these people began to go back to their homes, their schools, and their workbenches, the cycle of *mass* protest ended. What remained were people fighting under the banners of movements over competitive ideological claims.

People's demands, even extreme ones, emerged from their everyday grievances and out of policy debates that had started in the national political system. Their protest was not a demand for Utopia; it was politics by another name. Even the broad interpretative themes of workerism and autonomy had practical functions in mobilizing people, and strategic ones in trying to outflank the traditional parties and unions of the left.

The major shifts in the structure of demands we found in this chapter were like the changes in the forms of protest and the social actors that we saw in the last two chapters. The period began when known organizations put forward substantive demands on behalf of narrow constituencies. During the early intensive peak of mobilization, people began to demand new rights, to advance larger numbers of grievances, to support each other in solidarity, as organizations that had initiated the cycle were outmanoeuvred, and new ones appeared.

As the cycle progressed and mass mobilization declined, the confrontational forms of mass action disappeared, to be replaced, on the one hand, by more conventional protests and on the other, by violence. Tactical innovation diminished, old organizations reappeared and new ones joined them, and sectoral conflict fell. Constituencies became narrower and more specialized, the number of grievances in each protest declined, and it became harder for protesters to gain popular support. The exciting, confrontational but mainly peaceful period of intensive mobilization gave way to narrower claims, on the one hand, and to violent oppositions, on the other.

Although the tissue of concrete and specific conflicts at the grassroots of Italian society may not have been inherently revolutionary, their sheer bulk helped to produce an enormous load on the country's decision-making capacity. This did not render the crisis less critical; as no less an expert on Italian politics than Antonio Gramsci would have said, a democratic capitalist system is more easily brought to a halt by a multitude of small battles in the trenches of civil society than by a frontal attack on the system.

Why was the system not brought to a halt? The findings of this chapter and those of the last two document a wave of collective enthusiasm, solidarity, and confrontation that rose to a peak from 1965 to 1969; but they also show that this intensive period of mobilization very quickly came to a close. Those who remember *il sessantotto* as a period of creative mass politics will find evidence for it in these chapters. But those who recall that it produced a revolutionary groundswell are probably deluding themselves; demobilization proceeded rapidly in most sectors after 1970.

In the absence of a revolutionary groundswell, at least three things contributed to the extension of disorder into the mid-1970s: first, there was a diffusion of protest to sectors of Italian society that had not participated, or had participated only in part, in collective action in the early years; second, the major organizations, groups, and parties that took up collective action after 1968 were still in a *political* position to continue it even after mobilization declined; and third, there was a spiral of competitive violence that polarized conflict but also eventually brought the cycle to a close. We shall turn to these trends in Part Two.

Part Two -

MOVEMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS

6

EARLY RISERS: THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

Milan, 7 March 1968. The director of the Parini high school is suspended by the Education Minister for refusing to call in the police to roust the students who occupied his school two days earlier.[1]

8 March. A long line of over 10,000 students, both high school and university, march to the offices of the education authority to protest at the principal's suspension. They block the street in front of the authority.

10–11 March. A national student conference is held at Milan's occupied State University to discuss the student movement's future. Leaders from the celebrated occupations of Trento (Marco Boato) and Turin (Luigi Bobbio and Guido Viale) give speeches and are listened to avidly.

21 March. At the Catholic University, where there has been continual agitation since an occupation the previous October, a new occupation begins, with the goal of forcing the academic authorities to negotiate on the issue of student participation in University affairs. The next day, after repelling a Fascist attack, the occupiers bar the University's entrance. On the 23rd, the Rector calls in the police, who clear out the University and lock the gates. In a simulated 'siege', the ex-occupiers take possession of Largo Gemelli.

25 March. The State University is also emptied by the police. But the ex-occupiers organize a march against the actions of the police, and are joined by high school students and by students from Milan's third university, the Bocconi. Over 4,000 strong, they march to join the Catholic University students camped out in Largo Gemelli. In the course of a tense confrontation between police 'occupiers' and the reinforced student 'siegers', a suspended Catholic University student, Mario Capanna, calls out to the police: 'I'm going to give you ten minutes to leave the building' (Lumley 1983: 190). Someone throws rotten oranges, and the police charge into the demonstrators, arresting over fifty of them.

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[1] The information for this narrative comes from two main sources: Studenti del Parini (1968) and Grazioli (1979: ch. 2).

The events of March 1968 in Milan and the battle of Largo Gemelli that ended them illustrate four key characteristics of the university students' movement: the shrewd political instincts of the students; the cooperation between students in different cities and between high school and university students; the broad range of tactics that they used; and finally—as illustrated by Capanna's challenge to the police at the gates of the Catholic University—the sharp rupture with deference to authority that released the energies of a broader movement.

The argument of this chapter will be that the student movement—though spurred by an international wave of protest—grew out of a much older insurgency within the Italian Left and among young Catholics. The students were 'early risers' who created a peak of mobilization that had elements of spontaneity, utopianism, and violence, but also elements of organization, pragmatism, and convention. The result of this peak of mobilization was to undercut the traditional student associations, transform old interpretative frames and create new ones, and to demonstrate to others the vulnerability of the system to disruption.[2]

I UTOPIA AND CONTESTATION

Although the moderate press was very slow to give them publicity, the *Corriere* recorded 143 university protests within the universities in the period we have studied.[3] The number of protests covered in the newspaper increased rapidly after 1965: from eight in 1966 to fourteen in 1967 and to fifty-one in 1968.[4] From 1969 on, there was a sharp decline of protest within the universities as the police became more intolerant of occupations, militants moved their activities outside, and the centre of attention shifted to the factory and to the cities. The mobilization of the university students began early in the cycle in a few major centres, peaked in 1968, spread rapidly to other universities and to the high schools, and declined as workers and other social actors entered the scene.

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[2] I am grateful to Luigi Bobbio for his criticisms of an earlier draft of this chapter. I still do not expect he will agree with the interpretation, but the revision has profited greatly from his comments.

[3] Unless otherwise noted, the events referred to in this chapter are university student protests based upon educational issues. For a discussion of youth protest based on *non*-educational issues, see Chs. 4 and 12.

[4] A chronology published in the summer of 1968 by the journal *Tempi Moderni* showed 102 different incidents in 33 different universities or faculties between November and June during the 1967–8 academic year; cited in *Avanguardia Operaia* (1971: 89). Our numbers are much smaller, since we have combined incidents relating to the same issue in the same event. For a discussion of the procedure, see Appendix B.

The university students' movement provided much of the imagery and a good deal of the dynamic of the intensive peak of mobilization from 1967 to 1969. But its influence presents an apparent paradox. As two American observers noted after a trip to Italy in the spring of 1968:

> The movements. . . are neither subcultures nor parts of a subculture. No special tastes in music, art or clothing set off the activists from the moderates. . . .We had no doubt but that the movement is attractive as a community, but the Italians seemed hardly aware of it. (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 1969: 68)

More recent studies have shown that there were indeed 'special tastes in music, art or clothing' in the Italian student movement.[5] But although the Ehrenreichs found 'neither subcultures nor parts of a subculture', they did unearth a major insight: that although the movement was attractive as a community, *'the Italians seemed hardly aware of it'* (emphasis added). How could there have been a subculture of left-wing students in 1968 of which Italians were hardly aware?

Part of the answer is that Italy's '68 began much earlier than France's or Germany's and began *within* the traditional Left. In 1964–5 the first major protests against educational reform were mounted by university students. In 1966 a young Socialist, Paolo Rossi, was killed by Fascists at the University of Rome, giving rise to massive protests. In early 1967 the administration building of the University of Pisa was occupied by a national coalition of student activists (see Chapter 10). In October the Catholic University was occupied in a dispute about school fees (see Chapter 8). And in November the humanities faculty building of the University of Turin, Piazza Campana, was invested by an occupation.

If the Ehrenreichs found no distinct student subculture, it was because Italy's *sessantotto* was already mature by the time the movement of May exploded in Paris. Unlike the American movement, it had its roots within the institutional Left and among young

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[5] Lumley provides the best picture of these aspects of the movement (1983: 209 ff.): The movement. . . created its own peculiar slang. This was a strange mixture of swear words and political jargon, which was later dubbed *sinistrese* (Left talk). . . . Like the slogan shouted at the demonstration, this slang gave a sense of group identity, but was not exclusive in that it was easily picked up.

Catholics, and began around an intra-institutional political debate over educational reform. The ideas of the new movement were partly outgrowths of this debate, partly an expression of the traditional *operaismo* of the extreme Left, and partly a new and liberating emphasis on autonomy. Although the students both imported and invented radical new forms of action, they also used traditional forms and infused them with new meanings. This fusion between new and old is best exemplified by two of the movement's major characteristics, 'utopianism' and confrontation.

Utopia and Politics

This is not to say that Italy's *sessantotto* produced no new visions and no cathartic forms of action. Utopian, expressive, and demonstrative elements were more prominent in the university student protests than in any other part of the social movement sector.

TABLE 6.1. *University students' protests compared to all protest events: types of demands*

Demand type	University students		All events	
	%	No.	%	No.
Substantive protests				
Getting rights	17.3	24	3.5	173
Getting more	28.1	39	42.0	2071
Policy demands	18.0	25	13.3	654
Expressive protests				
Identity or solidarity	11.5	16	10.8	529
Opposing others	5.0	7	25.8	1269
Getting out	0.7	1	0.9	46
Mixed types				
Substantive and expressive	19.5	27	3.7	184
Total	100.1	139	100.0	4926

However, they developed first around political, instrumental, and policy-oriented demands. The policy-oriented origins of this apparently utopian movement can be seen in a statistical breakdown of its demand structure calculated from the *Corriere* data. Table 6.1 compares the various types of demands made in the university protests to those found in the entire set of protest events. The table shows that, in over 60 per cent of the university disputes, the students put forward substantive claims for new rights, for benefits, or for or against policies of the government. In 17 per cent the protests were simply expressive, affirming the students' identity, showing their sympathy for others, opposing other groups, or demanding the overthrow of the system.

But Table 6.1 also underlines the uniqueness of the university students' movement in three senses. First, the students far more often demanded new rights than other social actors. The theme that underlay most of these protests was the new interpretative frame of autonomy, sometimes expressed as a struggle against academic authoritarianism and sometimes extended to a demand for a student-run educational programme in which professors would be little more than consultants (Grazioli 1979: 30–5; 186–91). The students sought the right to assemble, to influence curriculum and teaching procedures, and in some cases, to reorganize the university. They wanted to be able to publish freely, to criticize professors within and outside the classroom, and to take exams when they pleased.

The table also shows that the university students were more interested in general policy issues than were most other social actors. They made their own policy demands or tried to stop government actions of which they disapproved. This concern with policy was most evident in the area of university reform, but the students demonstrated as well against the war in Vietnam, in favour of pension reform, and against political leaders. Their policy proposals were radical and were sometimes put forward in a spirit of play, but nothing more sharply undercuts the undifferentiated image of the students as utopians than their attention to policy issues.

Despite the violent image of the university students propagated by the bourgeois press and their own violent rhetoric, as long as it stayed within the precincts of the universities the movement was largely non-violent. Even as moderate a newspaper as the *Corriere della Sera* shows that attacks on other people were less typical in the universities than in the protest cycle as a whole. When violence did occur, it was far more often between opposing student groups or in clashes with the police than against public targets or authorities.[6]

But if the university students attempted to increase rights and accelerate policy change, their movement was far from routine. They put forward their demands aggressively and dramatically; their policy proposals were radical and their opposition to the government's reform proposal was total. And as the final row in Table 6.1 illustrates, as in Zolberg's image of a 'moment of madness' they often combined substantive claims with expressive demands.

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[6] Violent encounters of both types occurred in 19% of the cases we found, but attacks on other people in only 10%. The same proportions would later appear among high school students, although here the levels of attacks on others and intergroup violence would be somewhat higher.

Indeed, far more than other social actors, the university students collapsed 'the wall between the instrumental and the expressive' (Zolberg 1972: 183). Although their detractors branded them 'utopian', the newspaper record suggests that they were an insurgent social group which shrewdly used expressive rhetoric and confrontational actions to put forward substantive and policy demands that could best be characterized as 'radically pragmatic' (Lumley 1983: 434). To examine this hypothesis, let us look at the most 'utopian' idea they produced—the idea of students as workers.

Students as Workers

An early ideological product of the university students' movement was the conception of the university as a metaphor for the factory and of the student body as part of the working class. So much has been already written about the workerism of the Italian student movement that only a brief summary is necessary here.[7] The theme first appears in the documents of the occupation of the Sociology Faculty at Trento in 1966. By 1968 the Trentini were theorizing that a university degree is a commodity produced by the university. The student, like a worker, must 'demand his right to reappropriate himself by deciding on how he will be trained and deciding on . . . how his exchange value will be increased' (Grazioli 1979: 24).

Despite the fragility of the Marxist analysis in the Trento and other documents, they had a wide appeal for university students and cannot be dismissed as mere ideology. They were elaborated in the course of dramatic occupations which attracted thousands of students, spread from city to city, from universities to high schools, and received national publicity. For example, in February 1967, a set of theses similar to those proposed in Trento was elaborated at a dramatic occupation of the administration building of the University of Pisa (see Chapter 9). In May these same theses, presented as a minority motion at the Rimini Congress of the UGI, helped to destroy the traditional student associations and spread ripples of excitement across the universities (Cazzaniga 1967). Such incidents bear out Lumley's observation that 'the early association of student politics with workers' struggles and the popularity of the proletarianization thesis gave the Italian movement its most distinctive character, and had lasting effects on its orientation' (1983: 166–7).

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[7] In addition to the memoirs of former militants such as Boato (1979), Bobbio (1979), and Viale (1978) and collections of tracts produced by the movement (for example, those collected in Movimento Studentesco (1968) and Marsilio (1968)), the two most thorough empirical studies are those of Grazioli (1979) and Lumley (1983). Of those works in English which emphasize the utopianism of the student movement, the most accessible is Statera (1975).

But it would be an error to conceive of the workerism of the university students as an expression of simple utopianism. The Pisan theses were triggered by a national debate about the social barriers to entry to higher education—hardly a utopian issue. They were linked to a political struggle within the traditional student organizations between traditional party supporters and insurgents. Workerism was not a manifesto for utopia; it was a trademark for political insurgency.

Defining students as workers had two strategic functions: first, opposing the traditional left-wing opinion that they are nothing but *petit bourgeois* dilettantes; and second, affirming that they were an autonomous social subject in their own right, using a rationale that would be acceptable within the subculture of the Left. The goal was not to assimilate the students to the proletariat, but to legitimate them as autonomous social actors using a language that the Left would understand.

As support for the movement mushroomed in late 1967–8, the incomprehension of the old Left and the massive mobilization of the students around the occupations fed a further transformation in the traditional theme of workerism. By 1968 the Trento students were using a new 'empirical logic' based on student needs and contrasting with the 'deductive' logic of the past.[8] Through conflict with the authorities and the mobilization of a mass base, a traditional interpretative theme was transformed into a new one which could be applied to many sectors of society.

More durable than the workerism of the movement was its emphasis on autonomy. This began among politicized students with the demand for the autonomy of their student associations from their party tutors; it was broadened into the concept of the students' right to make curricular and other educational decisions; into sexual liberation, criticism of science, technology, and bourgeois art; to the demand for direct democracy and anti-authoritarianism; and to a refusal to obey. These were absolutely foreign to both the Communist and Catholic subcultures from which the student leaders had come. They were the result both of the leaders' rejection of party control and of the infusion of a mass base into the movement.

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[8] As Bobbio writes: 'At a certain point we [the student movement] ceased to try to justify our desire for rebellion by recourse to marxist-structural models and began to demand that we be recognized for what we were. We didn't try to act as part of the proletariat, but as a distinct social group with its own needs.' (Personal communication to the author.)

For between the autumn of 1967 and the spring of 1968, there was a major increase in the size and scope of the movement. Former student leaders testify that this unexpected quantitative leap in the movement led to a qualitative change, to the production of new interpretative themes, the formation of a new collective identity, and a fusion between groups of different ideological derivation. The dry data of the newspaper analysis do not reflect this qualitative change, but they do show the quantitative expansion of protests and of new movement organizations that were its fruit, as we shall see below.

Forms of Action

The observation that social movements both create new forms of action and infuse old ones with new meaning was particularly true in the case of the university students. They organized demonstrations lasting for weeks; they used violent rhetoric while creating an atmosphere of carnival; they clashed physically with opponents and police but used little deliberate violence, and they soon fastened on to a form of action that became rapidly institutionalized and even ritualized—the occupation.

TABLE 6.2. *Conventional, confrontational, and violent forms of action as a proportion of total protest forms: university protests and all protest events*

	University students		All events	
	% of forms	No. of forms	% of forms	No. of forms
Conventional	40.7	356	63.0	6745
Confrontational	37.4	133	15.9	1698
Violent forms	18.5	66	19.4	2075
Other forms	3.4	12	1.7	186
Total	100.0	356	100.0	10,704

From the beginning, a great majority of their protests were built around confrontations—occupations, obstructions, or forced entries to university buildings. Table 6.2 compares the use of conventional, confrontational, and violent actions by students in the universities to the incidence of these types of action in the protest events as a whole. The university students used such confrontational forms twice as often as other social actors. In the first half of 1968 alone, of the twenty-nine university-based protests for which we have detailed information, confrontational forms of action were used in 90 per cent of the cases.

But although the occupation was the most common of the confrontational forms, it was seldom a single isolated event. Occupations quickly became a basis for other actions in which solidarity reigned, social constraints were released, and organizational activities were organized. Teams of enthusiastic students printed newsletters and produced wall posters; courses were organized and debates were carried on; activists made alliances crossing previously-established political lines. Occupations were crucibles for the release of energy and the formation of social networks that lasted for years.[9]

During the occupations, networks were formed—for example between secular leftists and progressive Catholics—which would not have been possible before. The carefully-crafted documents produced by these occupations were designed both to express the movement's dedication to its goals and, more pragmatically, to bridge the differences between groups of differing ideological derivation. Even high school activists could show such a sense of alliance-building.[10] Experienced student activists used a language of utopia to build consensus and develop symbolism that would hold the movement together, castigate its enemies, and appeal to new supporters.

The occupation was not a new creation. It had been a traditional action form of the Italian Left since 1919–21, when the plants of the sprawling FIAT empire in Turin had been occupied, and it reappeared in 1943–5, as workers took control of their factories from fascist-oriented managers. The traditional Left had used the occupation repeatedly during the postwar period as a means of expressing its policy demands and gaining publicity. In 1965, for example, the Communists symbolically occupied the municipalities of Pisa and Genoa to embarrass the PSI, which was negotiating for the formation of new municipal governments with the DC.

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[9] As Lumley writes of the influential occupations of the architecture faculties in 1967, 'An environment was created which was functional to collective living, debate and shared work; all major decisions were taken by the general meetings. . . . commissions were set up to examine political and educational issues' (1983: 164).

[10] Even the occupying students of the Parini high school showed a keen sense of coalition building. For example, they dedicated a portion of their deliberations to the 'subordinate position of teachers in the educational establishment'. (From Studenti del Parini [1968: 37–40].)

But the leaders of the new student movement used the occupation not only as a dramatic and disruptive form of action; they used it as a 'practice of the objective' of direct democracy to create social and educational space for themselves. The occupation both linked the student movement to Italy's revolutionary past and provided it with the political and physical space in which to develop its own identity and network of activists.

The major innovation in the form of the occupation came from the University of Turin in November 1967. Lasting for a month, the occupation of Palazzo Campana, the seat of the Faculties of Letters, Philosophy, Law, and Political Science, challenged the authoritarian structure of higher education and launched a series of activities that made Turin a major attraction for students in other universities (Grazioli 1979: 27–29). This became crucial in 1969, when leftists from all over the country gravitated there around the FIAT contract disputes.

The occupation of Palazzo Campana brought together members of pre-existing youth organizations and of left-wing parties with supporters of the new student movement. It demonstrated the movement's potential for mobilizing previously unpoliticized students around the issue of university reform. More than any other, it laid the groundwork for future extraparliamentary organizations.

The occupations of the architecture faculties of Milan, Turin, and Venice—which also occurred in 1967—gave further impetus to the use of the occupation. Occupations in architecture went back to 1963, when the new Centre-Left government placed the issue of city planning on the policy agenda. But the architects now used the occupation not only as a means of exerting pressure, but increasingly 'for the conquest of structural space within which to work at the creation of a new pedagogy' (Grazioli 1979: 38). In Turin they succeeded in gaining concessions from academic authorities, who even recognized their right to assemble (Grazioli 1979: 41).

The success of the Turinese occupations was not lost on other students. First in other faculties in Turin and then in other cities, students formed study groups, organized counter-courses, and drew up plans for educational reform. The tactic developed into something resembling a permanent assembly. By the time it had spread to Milan, it had its own ritual and culture. As Lumley writes:

> The whole area around the university was transformed by the presence of the student movement. Expectation hung in the air. News concerning the

> movement travelled down the wires of a bush telegraph run by networks of activists. . . .There was a feeling that to be at the Statale was to be at the centre of the action, even when the air was clear of teargas and the screams of sirens. (1983: 208)

But the occupation was only the framework within which the students arrayed a broader tactical repertoire, including public forms of protest like marches and public meetings, traffic blockages, and forced entries into classrooms, department stores and art exhibits, and more routine forms—petitions, audiences, and assemblies. They combined old and new in a bewildering variety of forms of action. Although Table 6.2 indicates the clear predominance of confrontational forms over others, the students used marches and public meetings in 13 per cent of the protests and organized assemblies in 21 per cent. As long as protest stayed in the universities, tactical innovation did not consist of inventing increasingly radical forms of action, but of incorporating more traditional forms of action within the framework of the occupation.

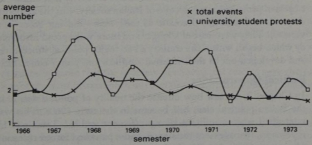

Fig. 6.1 Action forms per event: university students and all protest events, 1966–73.

We can get some idea of the tactical creativity of the university students by observing the number of forms of action that they combined in the same protest. Figure 6.1 traces the average number of action forms observed in the university protests for each semester from 1966 to 1973, comparing it to the protest data as a whole. As the graph shows, the level of tactical versatility among University students was higher than that found in the other sectors, even during the intensive peak of the cycle in 1967–9.

Like the tactical innovations that developed in the course of the American civil rights movement (McAdam 1983), the students' tactical versatility kept the authorities off balance and gained them media attention. It helped to attract the attention of moderate students, teaching assistants, and even some professors, and maintained commitment and enthusiasm among adherents. It also exposed the incapacity of the traditional student organizations and the left-wing parties to mount similarly daring initiatives, and this too was far from accidental. The 'wild' forms of action of the student movement were part of a strategy designed to create new political space.

II POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES AND MARXIST HERESIES

Both through its policy demands and through the forms of action it developed, the University students' movement produced between 1967 and 1969 a moment of high drama and creativity that unleashed a cycle of protest in many sectors of Italian society. But the students' demands and actions—dramatic as they were—did not occur in a vacuum. They were part of a longer and more widespread insurgency which began within the country's two major political subcultures and developed out of their internal conflicts and policy concerns.[11]

Political Opportunities

In Chapter 2, we saw how intense the quality of political debate in the Italian political class had become in the early 1960s. This was intensified when a militant labour offensive in 1962–3 was met by repression, management resistance, and a panicked forced recession (Accornero 1971: 116–25). It deepened as the Socialists moved from their long alliance with the Communist party into the Centre-Left coalition. And it crystallized around a number of policy issues that could be used by insurgents to develop a radical critique of revisionism.

These opportunities were not immediately obvious, as the Socialists made one concession after another to assure access to the so-called 'control room' (Ginsborg 1990: ch.8). They began to appear only as policy disputes divided the parties, providing opportunities for opposition groups to insert themselves in the political debate and alerting outsiders that the polity was no longer a closed shop. The most important policy dispute concerned the government's plans for educational reform.

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[11] The importance of 'communist heresies' in the birth of the new student movement has been underlined by Lumley (1983).

The Gui Law

Educational reform was really a series of separate bills and reform plans,[12] and had been a subject of intense debate among academics, publicists, and political parties since the late 1950s.[13] It was the Socialists who demanded educational reform as one of their conditions for entering the Centre-Left, and this stimulated a 1962 bill whose goal was to create a comprehensive educational system (Ruffolo 1975: 83). But this did little to modernize the system to meet the increased demand for education; the number of enrolled students increased from 1.1 million in 1959 to almost two million ten years later (Balbo and Chiaretti, eds. 1973: 49).

The political problem of university reform was encapsulated in Bill no. 2314, the so-called 'Gui law', named after the DC minister of public instruction at that time. Although the demand for education was increasing, the intention of the bill was to limit the size of a student body. In 1960, over 25 per cent of high school students left school early for the workforce, but in 1968, only 18 per cent of a much larger school population did so (Paci 1975: 277).[14] It should cause no surprise that the problem of educational reform gave rise to one of the most intractable controversies in the parliamentary history of postwar Italy.

It would be a mistake to see the conflict over educational reform as a two-sided dispute between outsiders and authorities. It began among political parties, associations of University officials, of professors, assistants, and students, revealing that there were basic fractures in the political community which allowed the outsiders a point of entry. The traditional student organizations—tied to the major parties and themselves shaken by the Centre-Left experiment—entered the debate first. They popularized the issue among the students but were unable to exploit it effectively.[15] Indeed, the debate about educational reform revealed how dependent these student associations were on the party system, and broke the common front they had maintained since 1964 (Pero 1967; Boato 1979: 117–26).

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[12] The following laws were passed: no. 585, on the status of professors, in July 1966; no. 942, a five-year financial plan, in Oct. 1966; no. 62, on university personnel, in Feb. 1967; and no. 641, on the construction of new schools, in July 1967. The evolution of the educational reform issue is dealt with by Lumley (1983: 149–67).

[13] The Il Mulino group of Bologna was particularly influential. With Ford Foundation support, it organized, from the late 1950s on, a series of conferences on this issue.

[14] At the same time, the universities were rapidly expanding their intake of students, from 268,000 in 1960 to 405,000 five years later (Ruffolo 1975: 86).

The new student movement grew out of agitations organized by and disputes within these organizations. Their radical factions seized the political opportunity provided by the realignment in national politics and used the issues placed on the agenda by the party system to escape the narrow logic of party control and become the core of the future student movement. For example, the creation of a single national student association—one of the demands of the future radical student movement—was first proposed by leaders of the Communist-Socialist UGI.

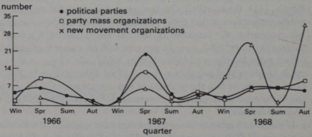

Fig. 6.2 Political parties, party mass organizations, and new movement organizations: participation in protest events, 1966–8.

These institutional origins of the new student movement can be seen graphically when we compare the participation of political parties, their mass organizations, and the new movements in collective actions reported in the *Corriere* for the first three years of the period. In Figure 6.2, the number of events in which parties, party mass organizations, and new movement organizations participated is plotted from the beginning of 1966 to the end of 1968. The graph shows that new organizations appear in the newspaper reports of protests only *after* the parties and mass organizations, and leap into prominence only in 1968, when the main issues of university protest—autonomy, reform of the university, the Vietnam war—are already on the agenda.

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[15] Luciano Pero (1967: 53–69) does the best job of synthesizing the negative effects of the Centre-Left government on the official student associations.

Marxist and Catholic Heresies

The university students' movement was the product of broader insurgencies within the subcultures of the old Left and the Catholic world. Even before the Centre-Left coalition divided the two major parties of the Left, dissatisfaction with PCI policies was growing in the unions and among students, workers, and young university graduates. This discontent could be seen in the appearance and appeal of a number of new reviews and ideological journals, as for the first time students and workers became consumers who were capable of buying culture and passing it on to others.[16]

Of the new journals, the most important were reviews of the extreme Left, which debunked the PCI, the PSI, and the CGIL, demanding their return to first principles of class struggle (Bechelloni 1973; Lumley 1983). Journals such as *Quaderni Rossi*, *Quaderni Piacentini*, and *Classe Operaia* represented groups that wanted to revive the old theory of worker centrality which the Communist party became inclined to drop as it saw its political future in the 'productive middle strata'. The theory of working class centrality was a natural strategic rallying point against a party of the workers that seemed to have abandoned them.

Of the three reviews, the purest expression of the working class centrality thesis was *Classe Operaia*, which had grown out of a workerist critique of *Quaderni Rossi*.[17] But it was the latter that had the widest influence on a generation of intellectuals, union activists, and students. Founded by a dissident Socialist, Raniero Panzieri, the editorial group published a journal of the same name, carried out empirical investigations of working-class conditions, maintained a network of contacts with other left-wing groups, and diffused information 'on all those experiences of political work that can be useful for research on and development of a socialist strategy in the current phase of capitalist development'.[18]

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[16] As Moroni and Morelli conclude: 'A great labouratory was formed in which stalinists, libertarians, council communists, leninists, operaists and spontanists all took part . . .. The old public made up of intellectuals, trade unionists and party officials was joined by a new type of purchaser—the student and young worker' (1979: 93); quoted in Lumley (1983: 125).

[17] Of the board of editors of *Classe Operaia*, several (Mario Tronti, Alberto Asor Rosa) returned to the PCI, while at least one, Toni Negri, turned to more extreme activities. See Bechelloni (1973) for an analysis of the reviews of the extreme Left.

In the same period, dissent resurfaced not only on the secular left, but also around the Catholic Church, particularly after the Vatican Council redefined the Church as the 'people of God' (Pero 1967: 59). Through journals such as *Testimonianze* in Florence and *Questitalia* in the Veneto, young Catholics were beginning to debate the meaning of John XXIII's Pontificate and to form a loose network of 'spontaneous groups' (the term itself is indicative of their links to the new Left subculture) around the country.

The old Catholic Action organizations that had provided the DC with its organizational backbone in the 1950s were crumbling as more progressive, less hermetic forms of political organization developed. For example, many of the Catholic University activists came from a Catholic student organization called GS (Student Youth). The disintegration of the old Catholic subculture resulted in divisions between moderates and radicals in the Catholic *Intesa* group in the universities, in which the old Catholic integralism was challenged by the novel idea of an 'autonomous cultural and civil commitment'—autonomous from Church control (Pero 1967: 59).

It was a student publication that provided the fuel for one of the most dramatic early incidents of high school protest. In 1966, activists at the Parini high school published an article on student attitudes towards sex in their newspaper, *La Zanzara*, 'The Mosquito', (*Corriere*, 23 Mar. 1966). The school was a public one, but Milan's Catholic community was shocked and suspensions were demanded. Incredibly, the editors of the *Zanzara* were tried under an article of the old Fascist penal code designed to punish crimes of opinion. The case became a political battleground, dividing students, parents, and the city's educational establishment, and politicizing many who would later become university activists in the coming years.[19]

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[18] For example, 'Notiziario Q.R. no. 1' (undated) contains information on left-wing activities reported by correspondents ranging from Biella in the far north to Catania in Sicily. Although it operated out of the Istituto Rodolfo Morandi—named after a PSI leader and theoretician—*Quaderni Rossi* influenced an extraordinary number of leading figures in the future extraparliamentary Left.

[19] See Nozzoli and Paoletti (1966). The case is summarised by Lumley (1983: 221–2).

The New Left in the Old Parties

But the new Left was not composed simply of new groups and reviews that rose up to challenge the old institutional parties and unions, for even within the latter factional shifts were appearing. The first, and probably most important, was the creation of a new left-wing Socialist party, the PSIUP, from the left wing of the PSI, after its majority decided to join the government in 1963. Drawing its membership from among the PSI's most radical cadres, the 'socialproletari' of course sought to occupy the political space to its left; but the hegemony of the Communists led them to take a position to the left of the PCI as well. Well before a new 'extraparliamentary' Left was dreamt of, the PSIUP had extended the boundaries of the parliamentary Left to new themes and forms of action.

The new party soon became active in the cities and universities in which the PCI was strongest, challenging it for supporters among students and workers. It was not uncommon for demonstrations to be organized by socialproletari and Maoists (Pero 1967: 64) or for PSIUP members to militate within extraparliamentary groups (Luperini 1969: 107). For many young intellectuals, the PSIUP would be a bridge from the institutional political arena to the new movements forming to its left.

Insurgent currents also developed in the PCI. For example, Aris Accornero, an engaged Communist intellectual, wrote in an anonymous pamphlet that the Communist party 'attracts a generic adherence among the working class, but fails to seek a more engaged participation . . . Why should anyone want to militate in a party that doesn't get you any further than Parliament? It is enough to vote for it' (1967: 10). Another insurgent group in the PCI was the one around Lucio Magri, Luigi Pintor, and Rossana Rossanda, the leaders of the future Manifesto group, who would soon be excluded from the party.

It is no accident that these new currents—in the universities, the Church, and in the institutional Left—began to stir just as the party system was undergoing its most delicate realignment since 1947. More surprising in a country that complacent observers still saw as divided into airtight political subcultures, people were beginning to cross the once-unassailable dikes between the Marxist and Catholic subcultures. Insurgents were not only distancing themselves from the moderates who controlled their respective political organizations; they were beginning to find one other across the traditional political divide between the nation's subcultures.

This new ecumenism was revealed in the reviews of both secular and Catholic Left. *Quaderni Rossi*, though founded by a dissident Socialist, also attracted support from Turinese Socialists and Roman Communists (Magna 1978: 315). Unionists such as Sergio Garavini, who would later play an important role in consolidating the factory councils, were attracted to Panzieri's teaching no less than extraparliamentary leftists like Adriano Sofri, a future founder of *Lotta Continua*. In the Catholic Veneto, *Questitalia* sympathetically followed the development of the student and workers' movements, while in Tuscany, *Testimonianze* was in touch with Florentine Marxists and preached a 'theology of terrestrial realities' (Pero 1967: 59).

The university movement was the crucible in which the bars between Catholics, left- and ex-Communists, and unattached leftists were melted down. Although the DC formed the Centre-Left coalition in order to isolate the PCI, it was through contacts with the PCI-led UGI (Unione Goliardica) that a number of young Catholics in the Intesa group moved to left-wing positions. An emblematic figure was that of Marco Boato, who was a member of Intesa, collaborated with the Catholic ACLI, and was on the editorial board of *Questitalia*. As a student at Trento, he became a leader of the student occupations and then a leader of Lotta Continua, one of the main future extraparliamentary groupings.

By the middle of the decade, there was a literate, anti-establishment subculture made up of dissident Socialists and Catholics, Left Communists, and traditional leftist groups such as the anarchists and Trotskyites, and a growing new Left influenced by Guevarist and Maoist models. Some of them found each other through the new reviews and newspapers, in the bookstores that carried them, and at university lectures. But the real source of their fusion into a new Left was their encounter with one another and with the mass of newly-politicized students in the university student movement. It was there that, for the first time, people gained the sense that a third pole was possible—not *between* the Catholic and Marxist monoliths, but, somehow, above them.

These developments led to divisions within the parties' youth organizations. The Young Communist Federation (FGCI) was in more or less open revolt against the PCI from the early 1960s on. In the universities, both the Communist–Socialist UGI and the Catholic Intesa were soon riven with conflicts that turned the debates of UNURI into heated ideological arguments (Pero 1967: 63–6). These conflicts were exacerbated by the new leftists—for example, by the PSIUP militants in UGI—who attempted to radicalize that organization's policies against the PCI's dominance within it.

The debates over the nature of the student associations illustrate how new Left advocates built new ideas out of a traditional leftist matrix. The PCI had long put forward a broad strategy of alliances with both political and social elements (S. Hellman 1975; Tarrow 1967). The idea of a single national student organization, which would express the students' solidarity and autonomy, was perfectly compatible with its proposals, and in fact first appeared within the UGI. The PCI could not oppose a single national student union, yet such an innovation had the potential to give the radical students a forum in which to challenge party control.

III THE YEAR OF VIETNAM

The same symbiosis between old and new appeared in the collaborative/competitive relations that developed between the new and the old Left in a wave of demonstrations against the war in Vietnam. The Vietnam war was the first event to stimulate the development of a new student movement in Italy. It should not be forgotten, however, that—in Italy at least—the issue of the war was placed on the agenda by the traditional parties, primarily by the PCI and the PSIUP. Anti-Vietnam demonstrations were also organized by the unions. In May 1967, for example, the CGIL held simultaneous demonstrations in Rome, Milan, Genoa, Livorno, and Reggio Emilia to protest against American incursions into the DMZ (*Corriere*, 20 May 1967). CGIL longshoremen in Genoa were particularly active against the war (*Corriere*, 21 May 1967).

It was the PCI's intention to capture the new militance stirring among young people, while embarrassing the Socialists and attacking the government's support of the American war. In fact, the new levy of young Communists in 1966 was officially called 'the Vietnam levy' by party leaders.

In late 1966 and 1967, the PCI launched a national campaign of mass marches, peaceful demonstrations and propaganda against the war. These were well-organized, largely conventional affairs, with students of the mass organizations, the Communist FGCI and the Socialist FGS, marching alongside unionists and working-class party members. The slogans reflected a combination of the international outcry against the war and some peculiarly Italian themes (e.g. 'Italy out of NATO and NATO out of Italy!'). Such peaceful marches and parades were found in 42 of the 54 anti-Vietnam protests we found in the *Corriere*.[20]

But these party-run demonstrations also offered an occasion for insurgents to embarrass the traditional Left by disruption. By early 1967, on the margins of many demonstrations, new slogans of Maoist and Guevarist inspiration ('One, two, many Vietnams') began to appear. In these demonstrations, as in the dispute over a single national student union, insurgency was facilitated by the PCI's alliance strategy: for a party that seeks the participation of allies and 'good democrats' in its demonstrations lays itself open to infiltration and provocation.[21] The party's parade marshals, 'with tactics that became more drastic from one week to the next, tried—but often without success—to exclude the radicals from the official demonstrations' (*Il Mulino,* Jan.–June 1967: 371).

Though the radical students also used marches and public meetings, they soon launched more dramatic anti-Vietnam actions, such as in February 1968 burning an American flag, or in November 1969 reading from Martin Luther King's speeches on the occasion of President Nixon's visit to Rome. As early as April 1968—soon after similar attacks began in the United States—companies like Dow Chemical and Boston Chemical were physically attacked for producing chemicals to be used against the Vietnamese people (*Corriere*, 31 Mar. 1968; 26 Apr. 1968).

Opposition to the peaceful demonstrations of the official Left also came from within the parties' own student associations. The main locus of dissent was the UGI, in which Communists, Socialists, and the PSIUP were vying for leadership and fraternizing with Maoists who figuratively dared young party militants to go beyond their parties' tepid anti-Americanism. For example, in a UGI handbill from Pisa we read:

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[20] My thanks to Nancy Quattrochi, whose Cornell research paper, 'Analysis of the Italian Protests against United States Foreign Policy in Vietnam', Dec. 1986, is the source of the following description.

[21] The press in this period frequently used the term 'Maoist' to describe all extraparliamentary groups, whatever their ideology. This indiscriminate usage reflects the ignorance of the press about such groups, but in fact even many groups that were not officially Maoist were deeply impressed by the cultural revolution then underway in China and regarded themselves as 'Chinese'.

> The anti-imperialist demonstrations organized by the student associations and the parliamentary Left were conceived by their respective leaderships as the expression of generic solidarity with the people of Vietnam. . . . The student masses who led these demonstrations transformed them, founding their protest on the recognition that the struggle of the Vietnamese people is only part of a general struggle of oppressed peoples against imperialism and capitalist exploitation.[22]

These Vietnam and other international protests[23] not only gave a new extraparliamentary Left the opportunity to organize; they forced people *within* the official Left to make a difficult choice between disruptive and more peaceful modes of action. In a pattern that would be repeated over and over in the next few years, the official Left puts an issue on the political agenda; radical groups outflank it by mounting more radical protests, often using the occasions of official demonstrations to do so; then, incited by the outsiders, youth groups within the official Left or its mass organizations go beyond the parties' traditional actions, leaving the latter torn between encouraging disorder and defending reaction. The new university student movement was born out of the conflicts and insurgencies of the old party system. From big oak trees little acorns grew.

IV 1968: BEGINNING OR END?

But eventually, acorns fall off the trees. Student generations are very brief, and after flaring up in late 1967 and early 1968, the excitement, the exhilaration, and the solidarity of the university student movement were quickly extinguished. Part of the reason was simple exhaustion. In Turin alone, Grazioli lists 37 separate occupations, marches or other events between October 1967 and September 1968 (1979: 212–60). After a year of constant activity, even stalwarts like Bobbio report that there was a tremendous lassitude in the movement (1979: 24).

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[22] From a document in the *Potere Operaio Toscano* dossier in the Archive of the Organizzazione dei Lavoratori Comunisti, now found in the Gramsci Institute of Rome. I thank the Gramsci Institute staff for allowing me access to this document.

[23] In addition to American imperialism, a major target of international relations demonstrations was the Greek dictatorship. These protests also began under the auspices of the offical Left but soon outdistanced the PCI. The Spanish dictatorship was another common target, especially during the Burgos trial of suspected Basque terrorists. And for the first time since the fall of fascism, after the Six-Day War, Israel also became the target of left-wing demonstrations.

Another reason for the movement's decline was factionalism. Some universities came under the control of a single group, but seldom without a fight. For example, in the occupation of the State University of Milan in March 1968, at least six different organized groups participated in the leadership.[24] Cooperation between these groups was strained and short-lived, and the student assemblies that began in solidarity and enthusiasm were soon filled with denunciations and ideological polemics (Grazioli 1979: 355).

A third reason for the student movement's decline was the growing pressure of the police and the occasionally violent forays of students hostile to the occupations. University rectors very soon overcame any compunctions they may have had about calling in the police. The latter were sometimes tolerant, but could be ruthless when they became the objects of flying tomatoes or stones.

As the roustings continued, there was a tendency for the students to move their protests to the factory gates, to religious and cultural events, and to the streets—as in the case of Largo Gemelli. This gave the students new scope for activism, but it increased the chances of violence, for once liberated from the garrulous routine of the occupation in the safe precinct of their university, the students were at the mercy of provocateurs, opposing groups, and police charges.

There were two keys to the student movement's appeal: first, its message of liberation, and, second, its activism. Both were reflected in its shifting and disruptive tactical repertoire. By occupying premises, bursting into classrooms, and blocking traffic, the students attracted media attention, gained new supporters, outflanked their opponents, and forced authorities to take repressive actions which made new allies for the movement. They also showed that people who dared could conquer a small slice of autonomy.

The disruptiveness in both the universities and the high schools peaked early in the period and declined gradually thereafter, as we can see in Figure 6.3. Factionalization, exhaustion, and repression struck particularly hard after classes reassembled in the 1968–9 academic year. There was a second peak of university disruption in 1970–1, after which the movement's capacity to launch imaginative new initiatives declined very quickly.

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[24] According to Grazioli, the main groups present were Intesa, Falce e Martello, PSIUP, PCI, the Maoists, and the situationists (1979: 355).

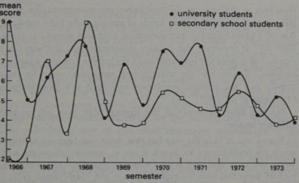

FIG. 6.3 Mean disruptiveness scores of university and secondary school students, 1966–73.

But athough Italy's '68 began early and ended quickly, its effects should not be underestimated. To other movements—urban, cultural, ecological, feminist, ecological—it provided new interpretative frames, experienced activists, and proven forms of action. To high school students it provided both leadership and an anti-authoritarian ideology. To the unions it provided a number of intellectual cadres and some over-arching themes. Even to the Communists, the movement provided both a challenge to adopt more advanced positions and, eventually, a new generation of activists (Lange, Tarrow and Irvin 1988).

More than anything, to the movements that followed—even those that lacked the students' aggressive rhetoric and imaginative forms of action—it contributed the example of how vulnerable the system could be to those who dared to challenge it and of how disruptive tactics could be used to increase support and gain a hearing. However, as a distinct movement in the universities, the university student movement was in crisis by the fall of 1968, and its leaders were looking for ways of going beyond it without losing its potential for rupture. This was the main source of the 'extraparliamentary' groups that formed in 1968–9.

CONCLUSIONS

How best to characterize the new university movement that arose in Italy in the late 1960s? Two kinds of images have been used: first, that of a great cultural transformation that was already at work in May '68. 'It traverses the ecology movement and the anti-nuclear action, but it does not imprison itself within the limits of a particular struggle'. Tomorrow the anti-nuclear movement may be extinguished; but 'the cultural revolution will light new fires elsewhere' (Touraine *et al.* 1983: 193).

But two other students of the French May have left us with a different image:

> In France and in Italy the very fact that there exist large workers' parties which are revolutionary in speech if not in practice [allows the student movement] to present itself as the University detachment of a revolutionary workers' party that does not exist. (Schnapp and Vidal-Naquet 1971: 17)

Were the students part of a cultural transformation that would 'light new fires', in Touraine's image; or were they 'the University detachment of a revolutionary workers' party that does not exist', in Schnapp and Vidal-Naquet's equally picturesque language? The burden of this chapter seems to be that the essence of the student movement that swept over Italy in the late 1960s lies in a combination of the two metaphors.

Touraine and others have taught us that the new movements that appeared in 1968 were the advocates of a new cultural and political reality: they were new social actors that used radical forms of action, developed decentralized organizations, and tried to force a new political paradigm upon the tired industrial West. They were the progenitors of the new social movements that would appear in the 1970s with similar traits and often with the same personnel.

For Schnapp and Vidal-Naquet, the French and Italian student movements were also new, but they were made possible by the existence of a traditional Left which allowed the movement to 'present itself as the university detachment of a revolutionary workers' party that does not exist'. In this view, it was precisely because the left-wing subcultures of France and Italy were so strong that the new movements could find the cultural basis for their attempts to revive revolutionary movements.[25] The Left was an unacknowledged scriptwriter for the new actors who rejected its direction.

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[25] For a view of French and Italian radicalism which is close to that of Schnapp and Vidal-Naquet see my 'From Cold War to Historic Compromise: Approaches to French and Italian Radicalism' (1977*a*).

If we look at the doctrines of the new student Left or at its more radical tactics for clues to its nature, we must conclude that it was emergent, creative, even utopian; but if we look at the political origins of its activists, at the issues that concerned them, and at their political shrewdness and sensitivity, its origins in Italy's traditional, Left and Catholic subcultures are sharply silhouetted. The new student Left was the outcome of a decade of re-alignment, recruitment, and insurgency within the institutional party subcultures.

This was not without its effect on the movements. As Adriano Sofri, a leader of one of the most important movements of the period, would ask two decades later: 'What was the tragedy? it was that the words we inherited [from the Left] were never questioned, but were simply accompanied by other words. We didn't question the nouns we inherited; we simply added to them . . . an incredible quantity of adjectives' (1985: 91).

But if there was much that was 'old' in the University students' movement, there was a lot that was new as well. If the concept of the student as worker was only an extension of a traditional interpretative theme, the idea of the autonomous organization of student life was new. Puncturing the deference that had hitherto surrounded professors and rectors was a very new departure. And the occupation as a forum in which to build consensus was a major innovation. These occasions produced a creative release of energy that wove lasting ties of solidarity among students from various political and social origins.

As in the 'moments of madness' evoked by Zolberg (1972), the mass movement of the students combined new with old: substantive issues were the frameworks for expressive demands; traditional repertoires of action were adapted to new purposes; and new frames of meaning were built around traditional themes. In connecting former party activists to independent extremists, former Communists to Left Catholics, the factory to the school, the movement was less new *or* old than it was formative. We shall see some of the results of the formative experience of these 'early risers' in the next few chapters.

7

ORGANIZING SPONTANEITY: THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Over the Lagoon

Venice, 1 August 1968. It is a steamy summer morning in Porto Marghera, the industrial zone of Mestre, Venice's link to the mainland. This area, far from the tourists' view, has developed into a major chemical complex and port. It is now dominated by the Montecatini and Edison firms, which have recently merged. In front of the flagship petrochemical plant, workers and students gather to picket in support of a strike the workers have been carrying out for the past week.[1]

The strike is unusual for several reasons. In a country in which plant-level militance is still a rarity, much of the impetus has come from the point of production, and many of the strikers are workers of recent rural origin and Catholic extraction (Perna 1980: 5). They are objecting to Montedison's salary plan, which will link future wage increases to productivity. Their demands go well beyond the proposals of the chemical unions that represent them.

The strike has an unusual demand structure. The workers make a number of demands, but two in particular are notable: first, they demand a 'different dynamic' of production incentives; and second, in the highly stratified occupational structure of the refinery, they demand a 5,000 lire *equal* pay increase.

The strike is also notable for the impressive number and variety of forms of action used. Despite their lack of strike funds, the workers have gone out on strike fully eleven times since January (Potere Operaio [Veneto] 1968: 8–10). In addition to picketing and calling workplace assemblies, they use the unusual tactic of striking every other day, which blocks the complicated production system but limits the costs to any individual worker. Students join their picket lines outside the plant.

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[1] The information for this section was gathered by Margherita Perretti, mainly from the following sources: Chinello (1975); Cacciari (1968, 1969, 1975); Passetto and Pupillo (1970); Perna (1980); and Potere Operaio [Veneto] (1968, 1980).

Striking on alternating days has a devastating effect in a technologically complex petrochemical refinery. Faced with production cutbacks and the danger of damage to expensive machinery, management asks 170 skilled maintenance workers to stay on the job during the strike. The workers respond: 29 maintenance workers are enough to maintain the works. On the night of 31 July management responds with a lockout.

The workers' reaction is immediate. Leaving enough picketers behind to block access to the plant, workers and students form a line of march and move off towards the Mestre bridge that gives access to Venice. From other plants in the Marghera complex, more workers converge on the same objective. Between students and workers, the number of marchers rises into the thousands by the time they reach the bridge, which they proceed to block. This immense mass of people then turns towards the station, occupying the tracks and preventing trains from getting through to Venice. They hold large banners up to the train windows. The banners proclaim: 'General Strike; Everyone Against Montedison' (*Corriere*, 2 Aug. 1968).

The events across the lagoon from Venice were significant for a number of reasons:

First, for their success. After only one day of battle, the strikers had exerted enough pressure upon management to force an agreement ending the lockout and offering the workers an immediate 5 per cent increase. This concession was a defeat for the company's salary plan and forced the rest of the chemical sector to renegotiate the contracts they had already signed (Chinello 1975: 182–4).

Second, for their influence. Before the end of the year, workers at other firms along the lagoon would make similar demands and strike with comparable agressiveness (Chinello 1975: 184). By the end of the year, the demand for equal pay rises for all had spread across the country, and manual workers were beginning to demand equal status with white-collar workers.

Third, for the novelty of the workers' tactics. The strike wave at Porto Marghera was launched with fairly standard trade union tactics, but it quickly developed a versatility and an innovativeness never before seen in this conservative region: strikes on alternating days; unity between workers at different plants; obstruction of traffic; and, most important, a central role for the workers' assembly, which became a kind of internal government that reduced the unions' role to representing its demands to management.

Fourth, for the role of the students.[2] Their deployment outside the Petrolchimico factory in August and their participation in the obstruction of the Mestre bridge and train station helped to urge the workers towards confrontation.

Finally, the Porto Marghera events were critical for the key role played by a social movement organization—Potere Operaio Veneto.[3] The egalitarian demands, the tactic of striking on alternating days, and much of the propaganda originated with this group. Its success did not go unnoticed by other radical groups organizing around the country.

The August 1968 conflict in Porto Marghera epitomizes the central theoretical dilemma regarding the workers' movement. Was it a spontaneous movement of young and unskilled immigrant workers, spurred on by radical students against the staid, bureaucratic unions that attempted to brake and control them? Or were skilled and unskilled workers, unions and radical groups, interacting around the same wave of popular mobilization which fuelled them both?

Even twenty years later, the answer Italians give to this question depends upon whom you talk to: some remember the workers' movement as a grassroots insurgency by 'mass' workers, aided by radical students, against conservative unions, while others remember it as part of a general social movement in which the unions played the key role.[4] We shall return to this puzzle after analysing the conditions, the major actors and the forms of action which developed in the wave of industrial conflict from 1968 into the early 1970s.[5]

I ECONOMIC GRIEVANCES AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

To understand the origins of the Italian workers' movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, we shall have to examine first how the changes in Italian capitalism and politics in the 1960s affected the working class. In the mid-1960s, workers were experiencing changes that threatened jobs, undermined skill hierarchies, changed the nature of the work force, and intensified production rhythms. But they were also gaining access to a new set of resources and opportunities that had not been available, either during the 'hard years' of the 1950s or even in the early 1960s.

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[2] Venetian students, especially those in Architecture, had been mobilized since the spring of 1967 (Grazioli 1979: 293–300). In June 1968, along with students from Trento, Padua, and Bologna, they helped organize a student–worker conference at the University of Ca' Foscari, inviting unionists and party officials to attend.

[3] This group is not the same as the Potere Operaio founded in Massa, in Tuscany, in 1966, which will be the subject of Ch. 10. The group represented in Porto Marghera will hereafter be called 'Potere Operaio Veneto', while the group founded in Tuscany will be referred to as 'Potere Operaio Toscano'.

[4] Even periodization differs for those who incline to a movementist model and those who see the unions as important; the former remember the high point of worker mobilization as part of *il sessantotto*, while the latter assimilate it to the 'Hot Autumn' of 1969.

[5] This chapter owes much to the contributions of a number of friends and colleagues who generously shared experiences and information with me. My thanks to Aris Accornero, Peter Lange, Nino Magna, Ida Regalia, and Marino Regini. I am especially grateful to Miriam Golden for her advice and careful comments on a draft of this chapter.

Economic Transition and Workplace Innovation

This was by no means a period of economic decline. Michele Salvati, for example, points out that from 1958 to 1963, the years of the economic 'miracle', the number of officially unemployed fell by 36 per cent (Salvati 1976: 694) and marginal and independent employment fell too (Salvati 1976: 695–9). In this period, hundreds of thousands of people were moving from the country to the city, from South to North, and into industry. The results of these migrations were overcrowding, social strains, and the workers' introduction to the discipline of the factory. In Turin, for example, immigrants found an urban environment in which rent alone ate up a substantial portion of their pay packets, even 'assuming they could find a place to live' (Rieser 1969: 3).

But the expansion of employment did not continue into the 1960s. A change is particularly evident after the recession of 1964. The recession itself was triggered to halt what was regarded as an unacceptable rate of wage inflation (Salvati 1975). The recession was remarkably short, and was followed by a rapid rise in industrial production. But these increases occurred without a concomitant increase in industrial investment and were accompanied by a slow recovery of internal demand, both public and private.

What explains this contradictory situation? Salvati theorizes that, while economic competitiveness rose in the favourable international conditions of the mid-1960s, increases in productivity were not won through investment in new plant and equipment but by intensifying work rhythms and replacing skilled by semi-skilled and unskilled labour (Salvati 1976: 711). He summarizes the results of this recovery for the working class in these stark terms:

> With the costs of raw materials stable or declining, and with wholesale prices increasing somewhat, the distribution of income in the industrial sector

shifted year after year in the direction of profits. . . . By 1969, the ratio of profits to value added in industry had returned to levels close to those of the 1950s. (1976: 706)

As industrial production became more integrated (these were the years when FIAT opened its giant new Rivalta plant), work processes were increasingly de-skilled. As a result, the work force was increasingly composed of young, semi-skilled workers, mostly the sons of recent migrants from the South and the countryside. These young workers lacked both the trade-union consciousness of northern skilled workers and their long experience of industrial work. They experienced in direct form the intensified work rhythms that management was employing to achieve increases in productivity.

The Unions in the 1960s

This contradictory situation—on the one hand, gains in industrial production, exports, and productivity; on the other, low investment, flat internal demand, stepped-up work rhythms—found the unions in a weak position. Indeed, management's strategy of increasing productivity by intensifying work rhythms was possible only because it had successfully excluded the unions from the factories during the 1950s (Salvati 1976: 707). Productivity was increased, Salvati writes, 'by using the most modern portion of existing plant and by hiring young male workers who earn low wages and can withstand the rigours of intensified work processes' (Salvati 1976: 708).

Union membership had steadily declined in the 1950s, and union members who remained were largely northern-born, skilled workers who had been recruited from the Resistance or in the 'hard years' of labour repression (Pugno and Garavini 1974). For example, union membership in the metal sector in Milan declined from 61 per cent of the workforce in 1951 to 22 per cent in 1961 (Beccalli 1971: 101). 'A major factor in eroding unionization', writes Lumley, 'was the increase in the number and percentage of unskilled and semi-skilled workers being taken on, especially women and youth' (1983: 96).

The brief explosion of industrial conflict in the early 1960s brought the immigrants to the attention of the unions for the first time (Sabel 1982: 153). During these years, a rapid increase in employment led to a wave of firm-level disputes, followed by national contract renewal strikes that were the most conflictual since the beginning of the cold war. In 1962 alone, a total of over 124 million man-hours were lost in national contract renewal strikes (Beccalli 1971: 91).

But the most significant development of the early 1960s was the increase in *factory-level* conflicts, which gave younger workers their first direct experience of challenging the bosses. In 1960 and 1961 Milanese metalworkers struck an average of 1.2 million man-hours per year in firm-level disputes, compared to a yearly average of 657 thousand man-hours for the five preceding years—an increase of 83 per cent (Beccalli 1971: 94). This brief season of industrial conflict revealed unsuspected reservoirs of combativeness among the young and unskilled (Accornero 1971: 116–23).[6]

The explosion of industrial militance in the early 1960s had positive short-term effects for the workers, and thus for the unions. Wages increased by 15.3 per cent in 1962, by 16.8 per cent in 1963 and by 11.3 per cent in 1964; while hourly productivity was increasing by only 7 per cent a year (Sabel 1982: 153). Union membership increased sharply too. For example, after hitting its low point in 1959, membership in the metal unions increased by an average of 15 per cent a year over the next four years (Beccalli 1971: 100). Not only that: as Beccalli found in Milan, union membership even grew in traditionally non-union small firms (1971: 104).

But the unions were unable to capitalize on this increasing militance by holding on to their membership gains through the stagnant years, and in the 1966 contract negotiations they seriously underestimated the potential militance in the working class.[7] The unions' problem was that they lacked adequate organization in the factories to keep them in touch with the myriad of problems being raised by the reorganization of production. They also lacked the unity that could enable them to bargain effectively with management. Third, this most politicized union movement in Europe lacked the political opportunities to expand. But these three conditions began to change in the mid-1960s.

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[6] In Turin, when FIAT signed a pact with a company union and with the moderate UIL while the two other metalworker unions were out on strike, the result was a savage confrontation between young workers and police under the windows of the UIL. According to Vittorio Foa, this conflict of Piazza Statuto 'brought the wrath of the CGIL, as well as that of the other unions, down on their heads' (1975: 130–2).

[7] Bewailing his union's inability to attract young workers, a FIOM secretary complained at an internal meeting that the union had been slow to grasp the weight of the 'unsupportable work rhythms and general working conditions' under which these workers suffered. 'Among the young workers,' he continued, 'the conviction has grown that, if they were to join the union, they would enter a sort of bureaucratic machine in which their impact on decision making would count for practically nothing' (FIOM 1966: 16).

Political Opportunities

Most writers try to explain the increased worker militance of the late 1960s by the increasing pressures on the shopfloor and the weakness of the unions. But these two factors were only a part of the story. Had the workers been simply weak and poorly-represented, no cycle of industrial protest would have occurred. And had the unions been as conservative as their critics claimed, they could not have 'ridden the tiger' of working-class dissent so effectively. Both economic and political changes provided both workers and unions with new resources and new opportunities in the course of the 1960s.

First, as industrial order books filled again after 1965, employment rose and management began to feel the lack of an adequate labour pool (Salvati 1976: 707). The demand for labour had an automatic impact on wages. In the Milanese metal sector, for example, firms began to take on new workers at highly competitive wages. In fact, many of the early strikes in Milan would be triggered by older workers demanding to catch up with the premium wages offered the newly-hired.[8] A tighter labour market provided a resource that the workers were quick to exploit.

A second resource was the halting, uneven, but nevertheless observable increase in inter-union cooperation. Despite the residual ideological tensions of the cold war, workers who had grown up after 1948 were more interested in contractual gains than in the unions' factional allegiances. Many—even dedicated party militants—grew increasingly impatient with the costs of the unions' ideological divisions for their inability to bargain effectively with management.[9]

Contractual issues were important in furthering the drive to unity. After World War II, collective bargaining had gravitated to the national level. Both social partners had reasons for favouring this development: labour because the unions were weakest at the factory level and because the CGIL saw itself as the union of the entire working class (Giugni 1976: 784); and management, because national bargaining permitted employers to avoid the wage drift that they feared if firm-level bargaining was encouraged.

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[8] For this and other recollections on the rise of industrial conflict in Milan, I am indebted to Ida Regalia and Marino Regini.

[9] For example, FIOM officials attributed the failure of the FIOM to appeal to young workers to the FIOM's lack of 'independence from any party or faction' (FIOM 1966: 16, 19, 33).

But from the early 1950s on, the CISL, inspired by what its leaders saw as American examples, began to agitate for firm-level bargaining (Giugno 1976: 781–5). Following a shocking defeat in internal elections at FIAT, the CGIL too overcame its preference for national bargaining (Giugni 1976: 786–7). The FIAT defeat also gave rise to an internal debate in the CGIL about the adequacy of its plant-level organizations and then—as early as 1957—to discussions about the re-creation of factory councils.[10]

The formation of the Centre-Left coalition increased the government's receptiveness to firm-level bargaining. Not only in the PSI but also among labour-oriented leaders of the DC (Giugni 1976: 801), the Centre-Left appeared to require a more modern industrial relations system. First in the public and then in the private sector, as Giugni writes, the early 1960s saw a grudging 'passage from exclusively national bargaining to articulated bargaining, interpreted as a coordinated system of contract negotiation at several levels' (1976: 806).

The increasing importance of firm-level bargaining gave union organizers a need to take a new look at their organization in the factories, especially in the two main metalworker unions, the CGIL's FIOM and the CISL's FIM. When they did so, they became concerned with finding new ways of gathering shopfloor grievances, unifying the base around contractual goals, and facing management with a common front. By the mid-1960s, each of the unions was trying to develop its own 'syndical sections' in the factories, and some were talking actively about factory councils. As one FIOM local secretary said:

> We may be able to construct 100 union sections, but if we don't constitute factory councils . . . *in which the workers will feel that they have a real decision-making power in all the union's activities*, it will be difficult for us to succeed in making our important new instrument work [emphasis added]. (FIOM 1966: 37)

Even in as volatile an environment as Porto Marghera, it was unionized militants who proposed the shopfloor delegates who manned the factory council there in the Hot Autumn (Perna 1980: 8).

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[10] It is not clear whether the CGIL militants were proposing something resembling a return to the council movement of the post-World War I period, or simply a technical organism that would allow them to keep track of changes in the organization of production. In our period, the term *consiglio di fabbrica*, or the related one, *consiglio di reparto*, was used in both senses, and sometimes in a third sense, that of a 'committee of agitation'.

The political realignments of the Centre-Left period also encouraged worker militance. In the 1950s union militants had been subject to continual police violence and management harassment (Accornero and Rieser 1981). With the entrance of the PSI into the coalition, however, an important component of government could not afford to be identified with repression. The presence of the PSI thus 'slowed down repressive actions against union demonstrations' (Baglioni 1976: 878). Even more important was the sense it gave to labour organizers that bringing their supporters out on strike was less risky to life and limb than it had been in the 1950s.

The Centre-Left also encouraged a debate on the first serious project for reforming industrial relations since the end of the war. This debate, which eventually resulted in the *Statuto del lavoratore*, was watched with interest by the unions, for one of the issues being discussed was allowing them access to the shop floor. The *Statuto* passed only in 1970, after the wave of industrial conflict had begun. But its discussion both in Parliament and among industrial relations experts accompanied the increase in militance.

Finally, several key policy issues under debate in the government broadened the arena of political controversy to include the unions and the working class. Of these issues, the most important was pension reform. Its discussion triggered an unexpected level of worker involvement that did not go unnoticed by either the unions or the parties. In early March 1968—just before a general election—a general strike was organized by the CGIL in favour of pension reform which succeeded beyond the union's expectations. The agitation, which lasted until summer, revealed splits in the government coalition and showed the unions that there were greater resources of militance in the working class than they had hitherto suspected (Reyneri 1976: 845). This helped to give a more leftward slant to the process of unification beginning among the three confederations.

II NEW ACTORS, OLD ORGANIZATIONS

Like the university students, industrial workers in the late 1960s had deep grievances, but also had access to new resources and expanding political opportunities. But there was a difference between them:

while the student movement had begun as an insurgency of politicized students within declining party mass organizations, the workers' movement had a base among skilled and unskilled workers, it had supporters in the student movement, the unions, and parties of the Left, and it had a spur in a small number of radical groups outside the major parties. Let us turn to each of these actors before looking at their interaction.

Skilled and Unskilled Workers

The debate about the role of skilled versus unskilled workers in the cycle of industrial protest has been well-rehearsed by Reyneri (1976, 1978), Sabel (1982), and others. From the empirical studies carried out by Pizzorno and his associates, it seems clear that the first important conflicts in 1968 were triggered by skilled, and not by unskilled immigrant workers. The unskilled 'mass' worker appears only later in 1968 and in 1969, by which time some of the skilled workers, their demands satisfied, 'disappear from the scene, when they do not actually obstruct the efforts of others' (Reyneri 1978: 89).

In the spring of 1968, worker participation had not yet reached very high levels, except for a few large factories in the North (Reyneri 1978: 54).[11] In this phase, writes Reyneri, 'the young unskilled workers foreign to the system of industrial relations are clearly not the only actors; on the contrary, in several conflicts, they are guided by experienced skilled workers'—experienced, that is, in the union-led conflicts of past decades (1978: 55).

The role of skilled worker 'vanguards' was particularly critical between early 1968 and mid-1969. At Innocenti, the leaders were older skilled workers; at the Petrolchimico of Porto Marghera and at Olivetti, they were specialized maintenance workers; at Pirelli, insurgency first broke out among skilled typesetters (Reyneri 1978: 86–8); at FIAT, the first to strike were specialized workers at the auxiliary works (see Chapter 11). Almost everywhere, the signal for insurgency came from a vanguard of skilled workers with experience of industrial conflict and ties to the unions.

But soon after these experienced militants began to agitate, younger, unskilled workers who lacked their experience and ties with the unions appeared on the scene.[12] They would give the cycle of industrial protest a sometimes violent, more often an enthusiastic, but always a mass character. Not by accident, their participation coincided with the demand for equal wage increases for all grades of workers that some have seen as an 'expressive' demand. It seems safe to conclude that they needed the example of the older, skilled and unionized workers to rupture the surface of the deference with which management was regarded and lead the unskilled out of their situation of passivity and subordination.[13]

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[11] These factories were: Zoppas, Zanussi, Marzotto; three automobile companies (Fiat, Innocenti, Autobianchi); Ercole Marelli and Marelli Magneti; and the petrochemical works at Porto Marghera.

Thus, just as the university students' movement had begun under the leadership of experienced militants, so the cycle of industrial conflict began under the leadership of an experienced skilled worker 'vanguard' and involved the unorganized and unskilled only after these 'early risers' had demonstrated the vulnerability of the system. But how were the latecomers stimulated into action? By spontaneous combustion? By 'external' movement organizations like Potere Operaio in Porto Marghera? By the unions? Or by some combination of the three?

Students and Workers

From mid-1968, as student demonstrators began to be ejected from the universities with increasing violence, many gravitated towards the industrial sector. Student participation at first took the form of picketing outside factories whose workers were already on strike. Students also added their strength to the unions' public marches. And in some places, such as Trento, they were able to share platforms with union leaders (Grazioli 1979: 274). Some students also tried to put their professional skills at the service of the working class, for example, a number of medical students from the University of Milan (Lumley 1983: 244–6). Others 'joined' the working class by taking on factory jobs.

In Venice, where a number of student groups were active at the factories in Marghera (Perna 1980: 33) student radicals organized a well-attended 'worker–student conference' in September 1968. This was followed in Turin by the most publicized and written-about encounter between students and workers: the 'worker–student assemblies' that were organized in a bar across from the FIAT Mirafiori works (see Chapter 11).

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[12] 'In most cases, workers with no tradition of conflict must first take part in a slow and prudent action promoted by the unions. Only several weeks later does their participation "explode" on the scene with spontaneous actions' (Reyneri 1978: 90).

[13] '*It is not true* that the cycle of conflicts initiated in the spring of 1968 was touched off by unskilled, southern, younger workers. On the contrary, in general they . . . were guided by specialized workers with previous trade union or party experience' (Pizzorno 1978: 10).

But the '1968 of the students' and that of the workers were not the same movement; in fact, radicalized students went to the factory as the movement in the universities began to collapse. This can be seen from the temporal gap between the height of the university students' movement and the peak of worker militance in Figure 7.1, which traces student and worker participation in the protest wave. The graph shows that while the university students' participation peaked between 1967 and 1969 and high school students became most active in the early 1970s, worker mobilization began in between these two periods.

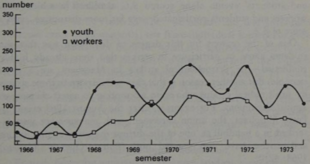

Fig. 7.1 Worker and youth participation in protest events, 1966–73.

Conservatives have scoffed that students were rejected by the workers as *figli di papà* (sons of the bourgeoisie). But in Italy it was not as unnatural as it would have been in the United States or Britain for students to participate in workers' protests. Where collective bargaining is weak and the unions are present in few factories, as was the case in Italy, industrial conflict normally leaves the plant precincts to spread into the streets and piazzas, where students can easily join picket lines and public marches. If the Italian students found in the working class the historical bearer of the revolutionary grail, the workers found in the radical students a combative reserve army to help publicize their grievances and man the picket lines.[14]

Student participation in working-class conflicts was frequently picked up by the press. Of the 1,886 cases in which youths or students appear in the *Corriere della Sera* data, almost eight per cent involved them in conflicts in the economy. Of these conflicts, seventy-two involved students in labour disputes. Student participation was most often found in the metalworking sector, but students also participated in strikes against Michelin in Trento, Pirelli in Milan, Marzotto in Pisa and Valdagno, and Montedison in Porto Marghera.

Worker–student cooperation produced a very high level of disruption, when measured by the index of disruptiveness developed in earlier chapters. While the average disruptiveness of worker-sponsored events (both strike and non-strike) was 4.5 on the index, and students' events alone scored 5.6, conflicts in which both workers and students participated were far more disruptive, with a score of 8.2.

One of the reasons for this degree of disruption was that the students chose to participate in strikes that were already highly conflictual—the petrochemical strikes in Marghera are a good example. But another reason is that they were drawn to these strikes by small radical groups who were attempting to assert themselves against the unions. For example, after the August 1968 events in Porto Marghera, the union agreement with management was described in a handbill as 'one of the dirtiest manoeuvres that unions and parties have ever carried out' (Potere Operaio [Veneto] 1968: 42).[15]

Yet, surprisingly, Italian unions, unlike the French ones in 1968, almost never rejected student support. It was far more typical for union organizers to welcome the students and use their support to publicize the workers' demands (Grazioli 1979: 273). For although the students urged the workers to put forward extreme demands that the unions did not advocate, student support could be useful. In addition to bolstering the numbers of those engaged in picketing and public marches, they fostered the impression of broad social support for the working class, making it more difficult for the police to use force agains strikers. If the workers' movement represented a new lease on life for the students, student support broadened the base of the unions' political base.

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[14] When radical students in Turin surveyed workers at the FIAT plant in the spring of 1968, they found that the workers had a surprisingly positive image of the student movement. Lumley (1983: 250) suggests that workers in Milan had the same positive image.

[15] Potere Operaio Toscano was no more tender in regard to the unions. Following a labour dispute with Olivetti in Massa in April 1967, a lead article in *Il Potere Operaio* accused them of being in a hurry to conclude the conflict, 'as if it was something embarrassing and repugnant, something you had to get behind you as soon as possible'. See *Il Potere Operaio*, 10 Apr. 1967.

Unions, especially the FIOM and the FIM, often supported the university students' protests. This emerges from data we collected on public events held by both the CGIL and the CISL in Milan in 1968 and 1969.[16] The unions often organized meetings of solidarity with student protesters and against their repression by the police.[17] If the unions had been as conservative as their critics maintained, why would they support the most disruptive movement to appear in Italian society since the 1940s?

Students and Radicals

The puzzle is easily resolved when we understand that anti-union polemics came predominantly, not from individual students or even groups of students, but from the small but aggressive social movement organizations that had been trying to organize the workers before the student movement appeared. For a number of years, these groups had been developing a critique of the PCI and the unions. Because the Communist and Socialist parties had rejected the idea of assuming power as tribunes of the revolutionary proletariat, the best way for these groups to gain political space was to embrace working-class interests and point up to the workers the costs of PCI interclassism and union moderation.

Though taken by surprise by the new student movement, and often critical of 'studentism', these radical groups were quick to take advantage of it (see Chapter 10). As the movement in the universities began to falter, it was mainly these groups which turned the attention of the students towards the factories. The majority of the student demonstrators who took the side of the workers were neither anti-union nor anti-communist; they were idealistically pro-worker and impatient with the often cautious tactics of the unions. But they were mobilized in aid of the workers by social movement organizers trying to radicalize industrial conflicts, embarrass the unions, and ultimately overturn the PCI's hegemony over the working class.

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[16] These data were collected by Rossella Ronchi from press releases of the Camera Confederale di Lavoro of Lombardy and from the Unione Sindacale Provinciale of the CISL in Milan. I am grateful to Maria Conti and Norma Romagnoli for their assistance in each case.

[17] For example, in February 1968, the CISL organized a public debate in Milan on the problems of the university; in March of the same year, the FIM-CISL distributed handbills to declare its solidarity with the university students; in May, the CGIL organized a conference on the right to study; in July, the CISL held a meeting with student movement representatives to discuss university reform. The student movement at the Statale was particularly anxious to strengthen ties with the unions; see Lumley (1983: 249).

The radical groups produced both theoretical documents laying out the role of the factory in the advance towards socialism, and propaganda tracts aimed at the working class. During the early 1960s, two- and four-page printed handouts with names like *Lotta Operaia* (Massa), *La Voce Operaia* (Turin), *Lotta di Classe* (Ivrea) and *Potere Operaio* (Porto Marghera) began to appear outside factory gates around Turin's Mirafiori, Porto Marghera's Petrolchimico, and Massa's Olivetti plants. In these documents the theme of worker centrality was joined with a critique of the PCI's interclassism and with demands for autonomy from the unions. For example, the lead article of the first issue of *Potere Operaio* of Porto Marghera was entitled 'Worker's Autonomy against the Plan: No to the abstention of the CGIL!' and contained a searing critique of the unions (Potere Operaio [Veneto] 1980: 1).

The New Left in the Old Left

These radical groups' efforts were clearly irritating to the higher echelons of the union movement and to the PCI. But the lines between old Left and new Left were not so clearly drawn, since the radicals were carrying water to the mill of two groups *within* the Left. As is often the case during cycles of protest, the frontiers of the social movement sector did not *divide* the left-wing parties and unions from workers, students, and radicals; it ran through them, thereby allotting marginal power to people who would have lacked the power to mobilize a mass following on their own. Who were these people?

The Labour Left

By the mid-1960s, there had appeared in both CGIL and CISL a small group of intellectuals and organizers impatient with their confederations' cautious strategies and lack of unity. For them too, 'autonomy' was a strategic symbol and was linked to the theme of working class centrality. But they interpreted autonomy, not as the workers' autonomy from the unions, but as the unions' independence from the parties—not because they were inherently opposed to political parties, but because the latter divided the unions ideologically and led to their weakness in bargaining with management. Gaining autonomy from the parties was a way to unite the unions as a prerequisite for defending the working class aggressively.

The Left within the parties

Less understood at the time were the radical currents appearing within the two major subcultures, Marxist and Catholic. In some parts of the Communist faction of CGIL, there was widespread impatience with the party's tepid anti-capitalism and its persistent desire to placate the middle class. Some Communist unionists had been deeply affected by the ideas put forward by *Quaderni Rossi* in the early 1960s, while others expressed ideas that were indistinguishable from the positions of the labour Left. A group of these were commissioned to write a report on union–student cooperation in 1968, but wrote so radical a document that the CGIL never approved it.

A left-wing current appeared in the Catholic CISL as well, especially in its metal union, the FIM. The FIM, trying hard to compete from a minority position against its CGIL opponent, the FIOM, began to support aggressive factory actions and radical programmes. A centre for this agitation was the FIM's Milan federation, the source of many of the innovative ideas that would be picked up by the union movement as a whole during the cycle of industrial protest.

Some of this new militance found expression in official forums of the various unions. One of these was the CGIL's *Quaderni* di *Rassegna Sindacale*. It contained articles by Communists, *social-proletari*, and unionists from several federations, and was available on the same shelves as the 'little' intellectual journals in bookstores around the country. Another was *Dibattito sindacale*, the journal of the FIM, which had been infused with a new and radical set of goals in the 1960s. FIM intellectuals criticized the idea of skill hierarchies and theorized about the role of 'mass workers' (Cella, Manghi, and Piva 1972: 39–46).

Some members of the Left within the parties had links to the internal critics of the unions and, indirectly, to more radical groups on the left. This can be gleaned from an anonymous pamphlet, written in 1967 by a Communist intellectual close to the unions. The author observes, 'In order for the party's organizations to come to life materially in every factory, it will first be necessary for the relations of production to succeed in coming to life politically in the line of the party' (Accornero 1967: 54–5).

The successes of the radical groups in conflicts like those in Porto Marghera in 1968 were not due to them alone and must be seen within this pluralistic and highly competitive context. The radicals, now experienced in both student and working-class politics, tried to use their new-found student allies to achieve their goals of creating a presence in the factory to radicalize the workers, embarrass the unions, and undermine the PCI's hegemony of the Left. The labour Left—though it never had a mass base—was prepared to exploit this new actor to advance its own views in the unions. Even members of the Communist Left in the CGIL and the radicals in the CISL, though they regarded these groups as somewhat mad, applauded their efforts for tactical purposes.[18]

Competitive Mobilization

The effect of this partial convergence among radicals inside and outside the unions and the party system was to legitimate radical claims and increase the level of disruption in the factory, particularly where the unions were weak, as they were in Porto Marghera (Perna 1980: 7), or where the CGIL had only followed moderate strategies for the sake of inter-union unity, as at Pirelli (Bolchini 1985: 90). Where there was local union dissidence from the national line of the unions, the radicals gained a sympathetic hearing among union members, and the potential for mobilization was increased. This takes us to the heart of the puzzle of worker mobilization.

Some theorists of social movements have argued that organization dampens disruption, thus reducing levels of mobilization.[19] Others have argued that organization is irrelevant, for it is militancy at the point of production that produces insurgency (Arrighi and Silver 1983). But whether organizations stimulate or smother disruption depends on what *kind* of organizations they are and on their relations to one another. In Italy in the late 1960s, we find striking parallels to the situation that was found in heavy industry in the United States in the 1930s, not only because disruption arose at the point of production, but because it was the result of competitive mobilization in a rapidly expanding political opportunity structure.

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[18] 'It is only because in Italy we find a unique alliance running across the new Left in the CISL, the new Left in the CGIL, and the Communists in the CGIL that the union movement as a whole fuses with the social movements' (Miriam Golden, personal communication to the author).

[19] Some have seen the factory-floor disruptions in the U.S. in the 1930s as spontaneous shopfloor rebellions that were eventually smothered by the unions. These disputes were not characterized by a lack of organization but by competitive mobilization by Communist, Socialist, and UMW-sponsored labour organizers who challenged the AF of L in hitherto unorganized sectors using political opportunities provided by the New Deal. For a discussion, see Piven and Cloward (1977: ch. 3).

The small and scattered radical groups with their student supporters and anti-hierarchical rhetoric could never have organized masses of workers throughout industry to strike on their own. Neither did the other radical factions—the labour Left, the Communist Left—have the strength or organization to do so. But the growing work pressure in the factory, the increased demand for labour, and the new political opportunities both stimulated an increase in worker militance and encouraged external radicals, labour Left, and Communist Left to work from their separate angles for worker mobilization. This competitive process of mobilization led to a level of disruption that was commensurate with the American sit-down strikes of the 1930s.

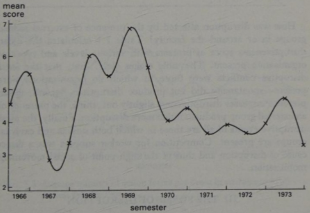

Fig. 7.2 Working-class disruptiveness, 1966–73.

We can see the increasing level of the disruptiveness of industrial conflict in this period in Figure 7.2. The graph shows a rapid collapse in disruptiveness after the contract renewal strikes of 1966, followed by a sharp increase, a peak of disruption in 1968–9, and a new decline in 1970–2. Disruptiveness increased once again in 1973, but not even to the level of 1966 and nowhere near the level of 1968–9. Although the wave of industrial conflict would continue unevenly throughout the 1970s, the peak of disruption was in 1968–69, just after disruption had fallen in the universities (cf. Fig. 6.3).

TABLE 7.1. *Disruptiveness of protest events by number and type of organizations present*

	Score	No.
No organization present	3.3	2944
One or more union present	3.7	1351
One or more external group	8.3	627
One or more union and one or more external group	8.8	58
All events	4.3	4980

How was disruption affected by the presence of external radical groups in or around the factory? Table 7.1 calculates the mean disruptivenesss score of protests with various levels and types of organization present. The table makes clear, first, that the *least* disruptive conflicts were those in which no organizations were present—spontaneity did not produce disruption. Second, union presence increases disruptiveness slightly but, third, the presence of an external group produces much more disruption. Finally, the most disruptive events of all are those in which both unions and external groups are present. Competition for worker support was a direct cause of disruption and thus of the high point of social movement mobilization.

III THE FORMS OF DISRUPTION

Not only was there a dramatic increase in disruption in 1968–9; there was a long-term decline after 1969. How does this fit with the image of a 'sliding May' that theorists of Italian industrial conflict have proferred (Reyneri 1978)? Does it not prove, as the extraparliamentary Left later claimed, that the unions stifled conflict, centralized control, and reduced the workers' radical demands to negotiable proportions? Or did the unions, like a 'sorcerer's apprentice', extend the protest wave by bringing conflict into new sectors and new areas, adapting the wild forms of disruption of 1968–9 as effective bargaining tools?

Let us look first at tactical versatility. In Chapter 3, we saw that during the peak of intensive mobilization from 1967 to 1969, there was a sharp increase in the average number of forms of action employed (see Figure 3.3). Strikes followed a similar pattern, but with two main differences: as Figure 7.3 shows, the increase in the average number of action forms per event began to rise only in the second half of 1968; and, with occasional declines, it turned definitively downward only at the end of 1972. Tactical innovation developed in the strike wave only after it had peaked in the protest cycle as a whole, and continued—and this is the main point—*after* the unions had re-established control. Would this have been the case had the unions been trying to suffocate conflict, as their movement antagonists maintained?

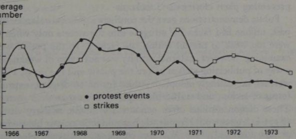

FIG. 7.3 Average number of action forms per event in strikes and in all protest events, 1966–73.

The forms of tactical innovation used in the strike did bear some resemblance to those that were typical of the student movement, but they were far more various and they mixed conventional with confrontational forms. According to Dubois, they included 'repeated shop-floor strikes spaced at either regular or irregular intervals, or co-ordinated sector-by-sector stoppages, affecting alternately one shop or work-group and then another, as well as acts of industrial sabotage' (1978: 8).

A whole new vocabulary of strike forms developed, from the *sciopero bianco* (go-slow) to the *sciopero a singhiozzo* (literally, hiccup strikes), the *sciopero a scacchiera* (chessboard strikes), the *corteo interno* (marches around the factory grounds to carry along undecided workers), and the *presidio al cancello* (blocking factory gates to prevent goods from entering or leaving the plant). These innovations were not 'wild'; their logic was to create the maximum amount of disruption with the minimum expenditure of resources (Dubois 1978: 9).

In addition to these permutations within the strike, workers added distinctly different forms to their traditional repertoire, sometimes by intensifying conflicts within the factory and sometimes by extending it to the public sphere. Within the factory, occupations, obstructions, forced entries, and the 'practice of the objective' of reduced assembly line speeds challenged the authority of foremen and the control of production. These tactics, which revived old traditions in Italian factories,[20] also proved an effective means of preventing plant closings and lockouts.

Public demonstrations gave the conflicts a political valence. In the past, unions had taken the struggle into the streets only when they were too weak to prevail within the factory. In the period we are examining, however, external activity was not a sign of weakness but a way of publicizing strikes before the public and the press. Factory workers increasingly adopted public forms of display, expressive forms of action, and traffic blockages to dramatize their demands. These demonstrations often contained symbolic military elements (e.g. mechanics would frequently bang on milk cans or blow whistles as they marched), but they also contained important elements of play and theatre and bore a resemblance to the traditional carnival.[21]

Both the expansion in the forms of conflict within the workplace and their extension into the public sphere are illustrated quantitatively in Table 7.2, which analyses the strike events in the newspaper data for the incidence of other forms of action. The table actually *understates* the workers' use of non-strike forms, for it excludes all cases in which no strike was observed, and it does not record the myriad of ways in which the strike itself could be used (e.g. work to rule, chessboard strikes, etc.). Even so, this schematic representation allows us to see the rich panoply of forms of action of which the workers were capable.

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[20] Many of these forms had appeared in the late 1940s, and cropped up again in the industrial conflicts of the early 1960s. The fact that they reappear in the late 1960s suggests that older union militants and skilled workers 'may have been teaching younger workers how to use strike forms with which the latter were unacquainted' (Miriam Golden, personal communication).

[21] The bosses were often portrayed as puppets, and effigies of government ministers were hung from gallows and burnt at factory gates at the end of a march; Lumley (1983: 397).

TABLE 7.2. *Strike events: aggregated non-strike forms used by strikers (number of events)*

Forms of action	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
Public display (march, meeting	31	28	78	107	97	110	78	74
Assembly	10	15	40	69	84	59	43	33
Routine action (eg. petition)	13	15	37	59	88	77	87	14
Confrontational forms	32	15	52	118	72	70	31	33
Violent encounter	20	5	33	18	23	34	16	15
Property damage	12	4	13	28	19	12	3	8
Attack on persons	2	3	4	19	9	10	4	6
Total other forms	120	85	257	418	392	372	262	183
Total strike events*	127	117	196	306	319	416	269	224
Ratio of other forms to strikes	.94	.73	1.31	1.36	1.22	.89	.97	.82

*Strike events include all events in which a strike was recorded, regardless of which other forms were observed.

It shows us something else as well. 'Wild' forms of action—occupations, violence, disruption of the assembly line—began to appear in 1968, when the unions were still too weak to take advantage of the potential for mobilization in the working class. But these forms of action continue to be employed during 1969, a period of union-led national contract renewal strikes. The unions integrated the 'radical' forms of action into their campaigns, though at a lower level of intensity. As Dubois has shown, radical forms of action were used as planned tactics on behalf of contractual goals.

Finally, the table suggests that the workers emerged from the protest cycle with a broader repertoire of action forms than they possessed at its beginning. As the cycle wound down, their use of the more radical forms of action declined, but the public forms—marches and meetings, petitions, delegations, and legal actions—and especially the assembly were never abandoned. In fact, there was a more than twofold increase in the number of public meetings between 1966 and 1973, and a more than threefold increase in the use of the assembly.

There was also an increase in plant- and firm-level conflict. Italian strike waves traditionally accompany periods of contract negotiation and are both centralized and national. But towards the turn of the decade, workers began to regard contract agreements reached at the national level not as a ceiling but as a floor on which to construct more ambitious plant-level agreements. This was a major cause of the wage drift that helped to propel Italy into a period of double-digit inflation.

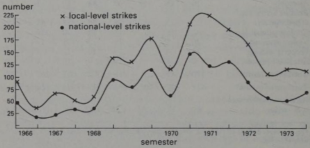

Fig. 7.4 Incidence of national and local-level strikes, 1966–73.

The dramatic rise of factory-level conflict can be seen in Figure 7.4, which breaks down strikes into those which were observed only at the local level and those which were nationally organized. The upper curve shows a sharp proportional increase in local strikes in the middle of 1968, and another after the middle of 1970, when the 1969 contract negotiation were over. The two curves approach one another again as mobilization declines at the end of the period. What we see in Figure 7.4 is not the replacement of union-led strikes by spontaneous conflict but its decentralization. As Beccalli concludes from her study of the metalworkers in Milan, 'the data bear witness to a strong relationship of initiative and control between the unions and plant-level conflict' (Beccalli 1971: 109–10).

Even in factories where there was little record of industrial action, as Regalia, Regini, and Reyneri conclude, the disputes often 'began within the framework of a dispute initiated by the unions. . . . Conflict began violently and sometimes spontaneously in factories where there already existed groups of workers experienced in collective action, identified on an occupational or political basis' (1978: 108). Many of the early struggles in 1968—even those that challenged the unions—were led by former or present union militants and were critical of the union line, not of unions *per se*.

For example, in the Pirelli-Bicocca factory, which is remembered as a fortress of anti-union sentiment, the nucleus of the CUB 'was composed of militants with considerable experience in the CGIL and the left parties' (Lumley 1983: 341). As a group of workers who had participated in its founding later wrote, 'It was above all a few comrades of the CGIL who interpreted the general rage and were recognized by the base as its real leaders' (Gruppo di compagni della Pirelli Bicocca 1972: 21).[22] Though critical of the unions for having signed a bad contract, these Pirelli CUB activists claimed at the time: 'We absolutely do not wish to form a new union or outbid the existing unions.'[23]

The explosiveness of the Pirelli struggle came from the catalytic relations among union militants, enraged assembly line workers, and radical elements competing for the workers' support. Elsewhere, the unions played a propulsive role. They were the principal means by which early industrial conflicts were extended 'from the more to the less unionised sectors, from big to small factories, from northern Italy to the centre-south' (Regalia, Regini, and Reyneri 1978: 106). If unions tried to brake violent conflict in the some places, such as Pirelli, they also diffused it to areas and sectors in which there was little tradition of industrial action. For every Petrolchimico of Porto Marghera, there were hundreds of small firms and plants in peripheral areas in which union presence *raised* the level of conflict.[24]

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[22] See Avanguardia Operaia (1972) and Comitato Unitario di Base della Pirelli (1969) for additional information. For a view that is closer to that of the unions, see Bolchini (1983).

[23] From a mimeographed workers' handbill of the Comitato Unitario di Base Pirelli, entitled 'Riprendiamo la lotta'. The handbill is undated, but its content suggests that it comes from 1969.

[24] This diffusion through union leadership is evident from Beccalli's analysis (1971: 104), in which she shows that FIOM growth in the Milan area was disproportionately great in small firms. She writes, 'There was less an intensification of the ties between workers and the union than an extension of unionization to unorganized areas' (1971: 104).

As the strike wave rose, the proportion of strikes with union participation declined, not because the unions opposed them, but because they were too weak to be present wherever conflict was occurring (Reyneri 1978). In 1966, union participation was reported by *Corriere della Sera* in 80 per cent of the strikes and in half of the total protest events. By 1968, union participation was found in only 65 per cent of the strikes and had declined to 26 per cent of the total events. Only in 1973 did the unions' participation in total events approach 30 per cent again, by which time they were mentioned in 67 per cent of the strike reports. The trends of union participation in both strikes and non-strike events are traced in Figure 7.5.

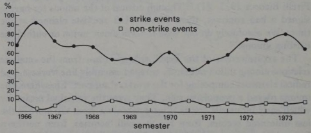

Fig. 7.5 Proportion of strikes and non-strike protest events with union participation, 1966–73.

The unions were certainly taken by surprise by the wave of militance that broke over the factories of northern Italy in 1968. But they were far from unaware of the depth of the grievances and potential for conflict in the working class and were actively debating and experimenting with means of tapping the workers' grievances even before 1968. This was particularly true of the labour Left but it was also true of the unions as a whole. By the middle of 1970, they were largely back in control of the cycle of industrial protest.

CONCLUSIONS

The industrial conflicts of the years 1968–72 began as part of an intensive period of conflict in Italian industrial relations which in some ways paralleled the university students' movement. But unlike the student movement, the workers' mobilization was not the result of either the rejection or the decay of existing representative organizations unable to adapt to a radically new political situation. The workers might be non-union; they might go against the positions of the union in a particular place and time; but they were seldom *anti*-union, except for a fraction that was attached to radical groups outside the unions and party system. At the time the cycle of industrial conflict began, there were enough insurgent spirits within the unions to put them in that position of becoming the sorcerer's apprentice of the workers' movement.

But would the unions have been in that position without the mass mobilization of 1967–9, or without the student movement that provided the radical groups with a fresh levy of activists? If the unions were a 'sorcerer's apprentice', who was the sorcerer: the worker vanguard, the radical groups with their student supporters, or the labour and Communist Left?

Reconstructing history in the absence of any of these major actors would be a fruitless enterprise. What seems clear is that mass mobilization is triggered by disruption, and disruption was greatest where various groups competed for worker support in the presence of deep grievances, political opportunities, and a tight labour market. The wave of industrial mobilization cannot be explained either as the outcome of a new 'movement' which displaced the 'institution' of the unions or as the independent outcome of union efforts. For in cycles of protest, the line between movements and institutions becomes blurred, and some of the most resourceful and effective movements appear *within* powerful institutions, as we shall see in the next chapter.

8

THE OLDEST NEW MOVEMENT

A kind of a cultural revolution is taking place, centred not in political organizations . . . but in communities . . . born outside, on the margins of or even inside the same ancient institution. Their common denominator is the 'reappropriation of the gospel'. (Balducci 1976)

WHAT signs indicate that a cycle of protest has spread over an entire society? Students who desert their classes and occupy faculties are certainly an element. Workers walking off the job and challenging supervisors are another. But these manifestations, however radical or dramatic, might occur on the margins of established society without in any way involving the institutions that sustain it. It is only when such institutions—like the family or the church—are riddled with contention that we know that a protest cycle has invested a whole society.

In recent years, European scholars have focused on the 'new' movements that emerged from the crucible of the late 1960s, especially on the peace, environmental, and women's movements that became prominent in the 1970s. Originating among the new middle class and inspired by 'post-material' issues, these movements have been seen as an outgrowth of advanced industrialism. Their 'newness' consisted in the development of informal, decentralized organizations, the use of radical means of action, and the rejection of systematic ideologies in favour of a kind of 'radical pragmatism'. They created a new political paradigm, or so it has been argued (Offe 1985).

Students of new social movements have contrasted their radical innovations with that of 'old' movements, such as the labour movement, which they see as class-based, centralized, and conventional. This contrast may be overdrawn in at least two ways. First, as we saw in the last chapter, during periods of mass mobilization, even the labour movement exhibits many of the characteristics that these theorists reserve for the 'new' social movements; and second, as we saw in Chapter 6, 'new' movements also use conventional as well as radical tactics, putting forward instrumental and not just expressive goals, and practising politics as artfully as they reject them in theory.[1]

How can we explain the mixture of 'old' and 'new' traits in movements that are supposed to conform to very different models? Placing the new social movements in the historical context of their origins provides a possible answer. For like the 'old' labour movement that appeared during earlier periods of history, the new social movements of the 1970s arose during a period of general insurgency and political disorder. In cycles of protest, even 'old' movements reveal a combination of conventional and innovative forms of action, decentralized forms of organization, and instrumental and expressive goals.

In this chapter, we shall illustrate this point by turning to the oldest movement of all: religious movements. If we can show that even such an old movement is re-'newed' during a protest cycle in ways that resemble new social movements, we shall have demonstrated the power of a protest cycle to diffuse mobilization to the most traditional sectors of a modern society.

In the two preceding chapters, we saw how often protest arises in institutions, not only because they are the cause of grievances, but because they provide people with the resources—economic, organizational, ideological—that can turn anger and deprivation into mobilization. The Catholic Church is archetypical in both respects: its authority, being absolute, is more likely to evoke grievances than that of more flexible institutions, and its organization and ideology, being widely shared, are more likely than either factories or schools to provide people with the resources with which to rebel. It is precisely for this reason that, since its founding, the Church has been beset by innumerable monastic reformers, heretics, evangelical preachers, and antichrists who insisted on taking literally the Church's own symbolism and values, and then used its internal network to spread their message.

In the mid-1960s, a new process of insurgency began within the

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[1] New social movement theorists often define these movements by their 'radical tactics'. But through a secondary analysis of the *Corriere* data, Sonia Stefanizzi (1987) found that environmental protesters used peaceful public meetings and marches in two-thirds of the cases she studied; they used confrontational tactics in 35%; and violence in 15%. Dalton (1987), in a comparative study of European environmental movements, found an overwhelming predominance of conventional tactics. Stefanizzi found that women, however, were far more attracted to confrontational tactics than were the ecologists. Such tactics appeared in 59% of the womens' protests she studied. Rucht (1988) makes a sharp theoretical distinction between these two 'new' movements—the first 'instrumental', the second 'expressive'—a distinction with which Stefanizzi's findings are compatible.

Church. It was stimulated internally by Vatican II, by liberation theology, and by the recruitment of new social and ethnic groups. But it was also influenced by the wave of protest outside the Church, and it enjoyed the support of many recent veterans of secular movements. Thus the new religious movements bore the imprint of many features of the general cycle of protest. These religious movements, their repertoires of action, and their careers were deeply influenced by the political opportunities and tensions circulating in the society at large. And even in the Church, the institution most isolated from civil society, protest soon came into conflict with the state.

I RELIGIOUS DISSENT IN THE ITALIAN CYCLE

In 1967 and 1968, in scattered parishes around Italy, ordinary worshippers gathered to demonstrate against the Church hierarchy. What sources produced this upsurge of religious protest? Ninety-three of our archive of protest events were classified as involving 'religion, the church, or religious actors'. Qualitative analysis of these events shows that they originated in a variety of grievances, but that many revolved around the question of the autonomy of believers.

A first group of religious protests were mounted against the conditions of the churches or the hierarchy's lack of attention to their needs. These were mainly peaceful community events, but sometimes the tactics used were radical. A dramatic case was in Cesena in 1967, where a bomb was planted near a dangerously decaying church as a way of demanding that it be rebuilt (*Corriere*, 26 Apr. 1967). Demands for new churches in Pordesca (*Corriere*, 5 Nov. 1969), and Locri (*Corriere*, 4 Nov. 1969), however, were more restrained.

In a second group of protests, the objects of the protests were Church administrative decisions or their implementation. In Amalfi (*Corriere*, 13 May 1971), parishioners demanded the naming of a new bishop. In Policastro (*Corriere*, 25 Aug. 1970), they protested against the Church's decision to abolish their diocese. In Bologna, a series of strikes (*Corriere*, 27 Apr. 1968) protested against the transfer of a Catholic newspaper to another city.

A third category of protests involved the transfer of priests, presumably for political reasons. In Naples, several hundred parishioners prevented a newly-appointed priest from entering his church, after the former priest had been transferred (*Corriere*, 6 Apr. 1967). Near Brindisi, a group of women prayed all night to protest against the transfer of their priest to another town (*Corriere*, 26 Oct. 1968). In Milan, when five local priests were transferred, a demonstration was organized on their behalf (*Corriere*, 2 Oct. 1968).

But parishioners could also protest *against* their priests or their behaviour. In Pregnana, a town outside Milan, people blocked a road to demand the dismissal of a *parocco* (*Corriere*, 22 July 1972). In Villa Latina, near Frosinone, a priest was expelled by the residents for what they delicately called 'secularism' (*Corriere*, 3 July 1973). And in Florence, parishioners in the Isolotto, opposing a priest sent by the bishop to say mass, 'persuaded' him to retire (see below).

A fourth set of protests was mounted for or against governmental or Vatican policies. Many of these, involving the Italian League for Divorce, on the one hand, and traditionalist Catholics on the other, focused on the parliamentary debate on divorce, which culminated in a new law and referendum. But other events involved the legalization of abortion (*Corriere*, 16 Sept. 1966), obscenity in films (*Corriere*, 11 Jan. 1969), or anger at the economic power of the Church (*Corriere*, 16 Oct. 1969). There were also two attacks against Jews but six protests opposing anti-Semitism.

Protests against the institutional power of the Church became increasingly common in 1968 and 1969. Several were staged against the Concordat that still regulated relations between Church and State on the fortieth anniversary of its signing by Pope Pius XII and Benito Mussolini (*Corriere*, 12 Feb. 1969). A series of protests in 1968 opposed the Church's tight internal power structure and the absence of a role for lay Catholics within it (*Corriere*, 15 Sept. 1968; 23 Oct. 1968). Traditionalists sometimes also protested against the modernization of the liturgy (*Corriere*, 25 Oct. 1971).

As might be expected of religious people, many of their protests were highly expressive in their themes and forms of action. A number of dramatic demonstrations were held against the commercialization of Christmas, among them the Christmas eve Rinascente protest in Milan described in Chapter 5 (*Corriere*, 23 Dec. 1968). And a year later, a wake for the death of Christmas was held by a group of Catholic youth in Monza (*Corriere*, 27 Dec. 1969). In Rome, demonstrators marched in favour of an anti-Pope (*Corriere*, 9 Sept. 1969). And a series of mysterious bombings protested at the very existence of religion (*Corriere*, 22 Sept. 1970).

In Table 8.1, 86 religious protests for which we have detailed information from the *Corriere* have been classified into seven major categories. As the table shows, protests against particular governmental or Church policies were very common—especially in the area of divorce. But by far the largest number of events were organized against the internal structure of the Catholic Church or against the transfer of priests for political reasons.

TABLE 8.1. *Grievance structure of protests involving religion, the Church, or religious issues*

Grievance type	% of religious protests	No. of religious protests
Conditions, attention to parishioners	9.3	8
Pro- or anti-parish priest	18.6	16
Pro- or anti-divorce	16.3	14
Other public policy	8.1	7
Anti-semitism, -Israel	7.0	6
Church institutions	23.3	20
Anti-religion*	17.4	15
Total	100.0	86

*Unexplained bombings of churches were classified as 'anti-religion'.

Why did these protests appear when they did—that is, during what we have called the intensive peak of mobilization? Catholics had been organizing at the grassroots level of the Church even before Vatican II, in *Lumen Gentium*, endorsed a new vision of the Church as a community of believers. From the early 1960s, dissenters were beginning to grow away from total dependence on the Church and its secular arm, the Christian Democratic party. Dissidence appeared even in the Catholic workers organizations, the ACLI and the CISL, which had been created as bulwarks against communism, and a new student organization, GS, became an incubator for insurgency. There was an explosion of new publications in these years: *Il Regno* in Bologna, *Rocca* in Assisi, *Il Tetto* in Naples, *Dopoconcilio* in Trento (Sciubba and Pace 1976: 24)

But widespread protest arose in the Church only when students began to march, demonstrate, and occupy faculties around the country. While the themes of religious dissent had been circulating in the Catholic Church for over a decade, it took the example of the student movement, and especially the presence of young Catholics within it, to turn that potential for conflict with the hierarchy into protest.

The diffusion of the student movement into religion can be illustrated dramatically by student unrest in Milan. It began in the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart around a completely non-religious issue, an increase in school fees.[2] In November 1967, between 100 and 200 young activists, many of them former members of Catholic Action or GS, occupied the university (*Corriere*, 16 Nov. 1967). The rector, who is under the direct control of the bishop of Milan, quickly called in the police, had the occupants removed, and expelled their leaders. including Mario Capanna, whom we met in Chapter 6.

The students' representatives, using a language and symbolism that was drawn from their background as Catholic militants, expressed 'indignation, suffering, and deeply troubled human, civil, and Christian feelings in the face of the authorities' behaviour' (quoted in Lumley 1983: 185). The language of this statement expresses the protesters' willingness to use the symbolism of their religion to embarrass the Church politically.[3]

By early 1968, conflict had spread from the Catholic University to the Milanese church in general. In April, a group of students erupted into a conference of Cardinals to protest against the Church's resistance to reform (*Corriere*, 1 Apr. 1968). In June, a fire bomb was set off in the church of San Babila to protest against the 'criminal activity' of the Church (*Corriere*, 11 June 1968). On Christmas eve, midnight mass was disrupted in the Duomo (*Corriere*, 27 Dec. 1968).

But the student movement and its offshoots were not the only sparks that kindled religious dissent in Italy. This can be seen in the remarkable correlation between general unrest and religious protest. Wherever disruption, social protest, strikes, and demonstrations against authority were widespread, new religious groups—most of them composed of dissidents from the Church—were eventually formed. This striking coincidence can be seen in the scattergram in

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[2] My account of the events at the Catholic University relies on Lumley's sensitive reconstruction in Ch. 9 of his thesis. I am also grateful to Bruno Dente and Ida Regalia for their reflections on this episode in personal interviews.

[3] Regalia, who was one these Catholic militants, recalls that the communiqué used this priestly language in a spirit of irony (interview, Ithaca NY, 17 Nov. 1987).

Figure 8.1, in which we have plotted for each of Italy's 92 provinces both the incidence of general collective action between 1966 and 1973 and the formation of new religious-based grassroots communities up until 1975 ($R^2 = .426$).[4] As we shall see below, religious protest was based on similar themes of autonomy and self-government to the student movement and used many of the same forms of action.

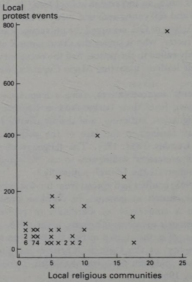

Fig. 8.1 Local protest events, 1966–73, and local religious communities, 1975. (Data on the number of local religious communities are from Sciubba and Pace, *Le comunità di base in Italia*, vol. 2 (Rome: Coines, 1976).)

It was in Florence, a city with a much smaller population than Milan, that Catholic dissent was most deeply rooted. A survey of neighbourhood Catholic 'base communities' shows that the first such community there dates from 1957, long before the student movement was even dreamt of. Two others, in Peretola and Le Bagnese, were in existence by the early 1960s. But only in the late 1960s do these communities begin to appear in the national press, engaging in disruptive collective action and raising the fundamental issue of the governance of the Church.

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[4] The data on religious communities are taken from Sciubba and Pace (1976). My thanks to Eric Gorowitz for carrying out the data analysis reflected in Fig. 8.1.

The most dramatic events occurred in late 1968 and the first half of 1969 around the earliest of these groups, the *comunità di base* of the parish church of the Isolotto. The conflict began with the suspension of a parish priest. But in its course, it involved most of the grievances found in Table 8.1, and embroiled authorities at all levels of the Italian Church and the Vatican, as well as the judiciary and civil authorities. As it illustrates in particularly condensed form how the cycle of protest that had begun in the universities was diffused to the most conservative institution of Italian life, and because it became a model for many other communities around the country, it merits examination in some detail.[5]

II 'YOU CAN FIRE A PRIEST BUT NOT A PEOPLE'

In a large, bare, and rather ugly *piazza* on the south side of the Arno river in Florence is a modern pile of a church which mimics the medieval city downriver in its ochre colouring, but clashes with it in its awkward, barnlike shape and unwelcoming façade. At the centre of the *piazza* are a newspaper kiosk and a covered pavement, the *sagrato* of the church, where much of our story takes place. At the side of the church, in an even more nondescript building, are the residence and offices of the parish priest.

The Isolotto is no ordinary parish. Like grassroots Catholics in other cities, its members have been organizing a *comunità di base* since the late 1950s. They were encouraged to organize by Vatican II and are moved to dissent by the agitations in the university. Within their neighbourhood, the city and region and the Florentine church, there are both solidarities and conflicts that are particularly favourable to the formation of a new social movement.[6]

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[5] This portion of the discussion summarizes a longer narrative from my 'Old Movements in New Cycles of Protest', in Klandermans, Kriesi, and Tarrow (eds.) (1988).

[6] The following section is based on personal interviews with members of the Isolotto religious community, with Father Ernesto Balducci, with Danilo Zolo, and on the following published sources: Baldelli (1969), Il Ponte (1971), Sciubba and Pace (1976), Seidelman (1979), Comunità dell'Isolotto (1968, 1969, 1971), Taurini (1968, 1969*a* and *b*, 1970), and Zolo (1970). Margherita Perretti's assistance in collecting these materials was greatly appreciated.

The neighbourhood

The Isolotto is a working-class district that resulted from a rare act of Italian urban planning. In the mid-1950s, a visionary Catholic mayor, Giorgio La Pira, planned a community of low-cost, low-density public housing with open space and parks built along the Arno. Soon filled by members of the native Florentine working class, Istrian refugees, southern immigrants, and former Tuscan peasants, the Isolotto had few social institutions in the late 1950s, when a progressive Cardinal, Elia Della Costa, built a modern parish church there and asked an energetic young priest, Enzo Mazzi, to take it over (Comunità dell'Isolotto 1969, cited hereafter as CdI 1969).

When Mazzi and two collaborators, Paolo Cacciolli and Sergio Gomito, began to work in the Isolotto, they found a neighbourhood without political parties, associations, or interest groups, with no community spirit or identity, and with a school that met in a barracks. In the absence of alternative social networks, it was natural for the parish church to become a focal point and logical that the theme of unity—the unity among parishioners, between Southerners and Northerners, between former peasants and workers, and between them all and the Church-institution—would come to typify the teaching of Mazzi and his associates (CdI 1969: Part II).[7] As Niebuhr writes of such movements, 'one finds here, more than elsewhere, appreciation of the religious worth of solidarity and equality, of sympathy and mutual aid' (1957: 31).

It was in defence of neighbourhood interests that Mazzi and his parishioners first became involved in controversy. In 1959 they organized a school strike to dramatize the fact that the Isolotto's children were being taught in a barracks. In the same year, they demonstrated in solidarity with laid-off workers of the nearby Galileo plant and opened the parish house for their use during the strike (Baldelli 1969: 153). In 1963, they declared their solidarity with laid-off workers of another local factory, the Fivre. In 1966, when the Arno flooded, the community participated along with Communist militants in the grassroots committees to meet the emergency (Sciubba and Pace 1976: 28; CdI 1969: Part III).

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[7] 'City hall was far away and local needs were ignored. . . . The religious assembly thus became the only place in the neighbourhood in which people could meet and talk' (Baldelli 1969: 152).

The city and region

Mazzi and his associates owed much of their early success to the progressive religious climate they found in Florence in the late 1950s and early 1960s, under a Catholic mayor who drew his inspiration from Saint Francis. It could hardly be otherwise in a region with a long leftist tradition. The predominance of recent immigrants—many from the South—gave popular Catholicism a chance to take hold, provided it kept in touch with its populist roots.

In left-wing Tuscany, it was probably inevitable that the community's activities would become political: activity was first organized in support of the American civil rights movement and against the Vietnam war. In the 1966 elections, lay members of the group created a stir by circulating a document demanding the liberty of Catholics to vote for whom they wanted (Sciubba and Pace 1976: 27; CdI 1969: 34–37). Mazzi and his associates soon jarred the local clergy by refusing to accept payment for officiating at baptisms or weddings, and offended the Church by opening the parish house to orphans.

The Florentine Church

At the same time as La Pira ran the city and the Left ran Tuscany, Florence had a progressive Cardinal who was willing to take up the cause of the poor, even when it put him at odds with the city's bourgeoisie. As in other parts of Italy's anticlerical Red Belt, the Church regarded Tuscany as a *terra di missione*. It was in this climate of progressive Catholicism that experiments like Don Milani's school of Barbiana had been started.

Milani was one of the most influential cultural figures of the 1960s. He wrote a book, *Letter to a Schoolteacher* (Scuola di Barbiana 1967), which Robert Lumley has called 'possibly the single most influential text in the student movement' (1983: 194). Milani tried to link learning to democracy, using the experiences of the Tuscan village school in which he taught and writing through the voices of the children, who, for him, 'had been excluded from their society not only by economic but by cultural processes' (Lumley 1983: 195). Milani was only the most visible of a group of Tuscan clergymen—often from lower-class backgrounds and almost always working in poor neighbourhoods—who saw themselves working for the People of God, and not for the Church of Rome.[8]

[8] Other progressive churchmen who were influential in Tuscany were Giulio Facibeni, Divo Barsotti, and Ernesto Balducci.

Very soon a network of neighbourhood groups began to organize in and around Florence: in Peretola, in La Nave di Rovezzano, San Giusto and Le Bagnese, in Vignone and Scandicci, and in the Isolotto and the nearby Casella—mainly peripheral or lower-class neighbourhoods where young priests tried to turn the parish churches into social centres.

From the start, the Florentine groups were preoccupied with overcoming the division between secular and religious citizens, which in left-wing Tuscany largely coincided with the cleavage between working and middle-class, Communist and non-Communist voters. Their goal was 'to stimulate the life of the parish without creating divisions in the neighbourhood between those who go to mass and those who do not' (Sciubba and Pace 1976: 23). In a city in which being poor often meant being anticlerical, the traditional Christian theme of solidarity helped to fill up the parish church.

During the early to mid-1960s, a network of activists formed around the church of the Isolotto, drawn from both Florence's progressive Catholic and leftist communities and from the neighbourhood itself. Some of the militants had been nurtured in the progressive La Pira wing of the DC, while others came from more predictable social movement sources: from among 'elementary and high-school teachers, white collar workers, frustrated social agitators who had wandered into the "circle" of the Church' (Baldelli 1969: 154)—in summary, from the same reservoir of neighbourhood and civic movements that would appear in 'new social movements' across the industrial West.

In the course of the 1960s, the influence of the Catholic Left began to wane in city politics and in the Church. In the Bishopric, the aging Della Costa was seconded, and on his death replaced, by Ermenegildo Florit, a 'pre-conciliar' prelate whose prejudice against politics did not prevent him from permitting Catholic Action activists to use the churches for their anti-communist message. Before long, progressive churchmen such as Balducci, Borghi, and Milani were losing influence and being forced into silence or semi-exile (Baldelli 1969: 151).[9]

Following the negotiation of a national Centre-Left coalition, the

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[9] Balducci did not go very far. Like another famous Florentine exile, he went just outside the boundaries of Florence, founding a study centre at the Badia Fiesolana at nearby San Domenico, where he now publishes *Testimonianze* and works for the international peace movement.

Catholic Left lost control of the city administration, for conservative Christian Democrats thought that now they could govern without the charismatic La Pira. Thus, precisely as a cycle of protest was spreading throughout the country, encouraging activism among young left-wing Catholics, the Florentine hierarchy and the local political class were closing ranks against progressive Catholicism. But it took a student-led conflict to trigger a confrontation.

The Cathedral of Parma

Parma, 14 September 1968. Forty Catholic students enter the soaring brick Lombard-Romanesque Cathedral, arrange a group of chairs in a circle, and begin to hold a discussion of poverty, of the powerlessness of the laity in the Church, and of the authoritarianism of the hierarchy. They have assembled to protest against the transfer of a local priest whose radical ideas have displeased the bishop and to demand an explanation of the diocese's decision to finance the construction of a new church with funds from a local bank (*Corriere*, 16 Sept. 1968).

They move down into the crypt, where they attempt to participate in the celebration of mass. When the priest in charge refuses to let them intervene, the police are called in and—in a pattern that was becoming familiar from university occupations throughout the country—the students are carried out. No less an authority than Pope Paul VI denounces their behaviour for undermining the Church of God.[10]

Florence, 22 September. Messages of solidarity with the Parma occupiers go out from religious communities around the country—from 'I Tralci' of Bologna, Monsummano Terme near Pistoia, Oregina in Genoa, and from San Giusto and Bagnese, La Casella, and the Isolotto in Florence (Sciubba and Pace 1976: 31).

In the Isolotto, a group of parishioners meets to discuss the occupation in Parma and the hierarchy's reaction to it. After animated discussion, they decide to send an open letter of solidarity to the occupiers. They not only express their sympathy with the students and condemn the action of the Parma religious authorities; they demand that the Church renounce its ties with 'the iniquitous system founded on the exploitation of men by other men' (CdI

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[10] *Corriere della Sera*, 15 Sept. 1968: p. 5. For a detailed treatment sympathetic to the students, see the volume by 'Protagonisti', *La cattedrale occupata* (1969). See also Sciubba and Pace (1976: 30–1).

1969: 152–6). One hundred and fifty parishioners agree to sign the letter. Though all three priests co-sign it, it bears the unmistakable imprint of Mazzi's teaching: the Church-institution is accused of separating itself from the people of God and of bowing to the power of lucre.[11] The Church will ignore the signatures of the parishioners and focus its attack on Mazzi.

5 October. The hierarchy's reaction is immediate and unambiguous. Cardinal Florit, ignoring the other signatures on the open letter, sends a long and official letter to Don Mazzi, criticizing his interference in affairs outside the purview of his parish and demanding either a retraction or his resignation by the end of October. The letter concludes:

> Either you are prepared to publicly retract a statement as offensive to the authority of the Church as was your open letter of September 22nd . . . or else, recognizing that it is absurd to continue to be part of the 'structures' that you so violently condemn, you intend to resign from your position as priest (CdI 1969: 156–9).

9 October. An assembly is held in the parish church to discuss the Cardinal's letter. The two hundred-odd people who attend are confused about what line to take and the meeting almost breaks up in discord. They call a second meeting for 12 October, at which a draft of the letter is discussed before what has now grown to a group of three hundred. At a third and still larger meeting on 19 October, the final document is approved and is subsequently distributed to all the families of the Isolotto (CdI 1969: 167–70).

Mobilizing a Following

What might have ended with a quiet retraction or with Mazzi's transfer to another parish is made impossible by the media. The Cardinal's letter is leaked to the press and published in the right-wing local newspaper, *La Nazione*, next to the headline 'Don Mazzi disowned (*sconfessato*) by the Cardinal' (CdI 1969: 171).[12] The symbolic loading of the term *sconfessato* is not lost on this Catholic community, which immediately mobilizes around Mazzi, now no longer only a dissident left-wing priest but a victim of the Florentine establishment.

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[11] Sergio Gomito was still outraged when he was interviewed 18 years later: 'The People of God were ejected from God's house and the Pope approved!' he exclaimed (interview, Dec. 1985).

[12] The community claimed that hostile right-wing elements were responsible for the story. If so, they did the worst possible thing they could for the Church's cause. In the climate of social mobilization at the time, reporters and left-wing sympathizers flocked to the Isolotto, and the affair became a litmus test of the power of the hierarchy.

23 October. The *Nazione* article outrages the new Catholic conscience, not only in Florence. In Parma, there is a second occupation of the cathedral, this time to demand the direct participation of the laity in Church decision-making (*Corriere*, 24 Oct. 1968). In the Isolotto, by four in the afternoon on the day of the *Nazione* article, the church and the *piazza* are full of neighbourhood residents and others—many non-worshippers—who take down the names and addresses of those willing to work in Mazzi's defence. By eight in the evening, almost a thousand volunteers have signed up (CdI 1969: 171).

24 October. The *Nazione* prints a press release from the Vatican threatening Mazzi with suspension if he fails to retract the letter of solidarity with the occupants of the cathedral in Parma, a letter whose authorship Mazzi has attributed to the people of God. A crowd assembles in the church and—outraged by the *Nazione* article—decides to begin publishing an alternative *Notiziario* and a wall newspaper, which soon appear all over Florence almost daily.[13] These moves duplicate almost exactly what happened during the early stages of the Catholic University occupation during the previous fall.[14]

The Isolotto has by now become a magnet for young people, workers, housewives, dissident Catholics, and disillusioned militants from the Left. The PCI itself remains silent. As Raymond Seidelman observes, the Florentine communists were unwilling to 'take sides' on an issue that they considered exclusively related to the 'internal politics' of the Catholic Church. However, some 'party sections surrounding the Isolotto . . . were more willing to explicitly side with the Catholic dissenters, and in fact were frequently involved in the mass meetings and popular assemblies conducted at the various dissenting churches' (Seidelman 1979: 250–1).

Making Allies and Enemies

As word of the conflict begins to circulate, hundreds of solidarity messages pour into the Isolotto. Bus drivers who live in the neighbourhood organize a meeting for their colleagues at which the problems of the Church are analysed through the events of the Isolotto. Local workers distribute leaflets at factory gates telling of forthcoming assemblies. The workers of the Galileo plant—which the community supported when the factory was threatening to close in the early 1960s—vote to support Mazzi and the community, and the Gover factory goes out on strike in solidarity (CdI 1969: 173–98; *Corriere*, 9 Nov. 1968).

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[13] The entire collection of the *Notiziario* has been preserved, and may be consulted, in the Marucelliana Library in Florence.

[14] 'They [the Catholic University militants] carried out an "information picket" and distributed a daily bulletin. The main decisions were taken at the general assemblies of all the students, whilst a "committee of agitation" ran the everyday activity. "Commissions" were formed to hold seminars and organize specific activities' (Lumley 1983: 190–1).

31 October. On the day of the Cardinal's deadline, an evening assembly attracts what the community judges to be ten thousand people. The informal, impetuous meetings of the early part of the month have now given way to a well-organized, disciplined assembly, with marshals to keep order, seating by block and workplace, and an agenda of formal speeches. Speakers represent groups of families, factory workers, and streets. With an eye to the press as well as its own beliefs, the community ensures that lower-class people, housewives, students, and lay people balance intellectuals in the list of speakers.

Mazzi reads out a cautiously-worded letter of sympathy he has received from ninety-three of his fellow Florentine priests. In his address, he returns to the themes of unity and of love that have informed his whole career; 'Siamo uniti e ci vogliamo bene perchè abbiamo cercato di mettere la nostra vita a servizio degli umili' ('We are united and we love one another because we have sought to use our lives in the service of the humble'), he says (CdI 1969: 198–201). Though in perfect harmony with his faith, the speech is also good politics: for as long as it is the *popolo di dio* whose voice is raised against authority, the Cardinal's attacks can be read as attacks on the entire community.[15] Like all social movement leaders, Mazzi identifies his fight with that of a solidary constituency whose rights are being abridged by an unjust authority. The interpretative frame is traditional, but it is extended to challenge the Church-institution.

In addition to generating some classical social movement rhetoric, the 31 October assembly also produces an eight-point resolution, accepted by acclamation. In this document the community takes responsibility for the acts of which Don Mazzi has been accused and underlines the unity of the parishioners with their priest. It goes on to assure the Cardinal that it is only his own distance from the people that makes it conceivable for him to condemn them, and invites him to come and share their experience, which will surely teach him the error of his ways (CdI 1969: 223–4). The source of truth has shifted from the hierarchy to the base.

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[15] 'Si tratta di un problema che non potevo risolvere da solo', Mazzi says to his supporters; 'vi avrei traditi ed estromessi'. ('We are faced with a problem that I could not have solved by myself; I would have betrayed and excluded you'; from CdI 1969: 198–201.)

6 November. Florit receives a letter from over a hundred priests of the region, in which they cautiously call the Mazzi case symptomatic of a crisis in the Church and, recalling the language of Vatican II, ask for a broad discussion among all the 'members' of the Church before a decision is taken on Mazzi's future (CdI 1969: 227–31). The Cardinal ignores the plea, but convokes a meeting of the diocesan council to inform them of his decision.

14 November. In an official letter, Florit, backed by citations from canon law, notifies Mazzi that a bishop *cannot* take the wishes of a community into account in dealing with one of his priests. He rejects not only Mazzi's position but also the claim of the priests that the 'members' of the Church are jointly responsible for its decisions (CdI 1969: 233). 'The parishioners' request for a meeting with the bishop', writes Florit, '. . . is contrary to the good ordering of the ecclesiastical community' (CdI 1969: 234). He closes by urging one last time that 'his' priest reconsider his present attitude (CdI 1969: 235).

Polarization

Late November – early December. The community publishes a new catechism, 'Meeting with Jesus' (CdI 1968). It is full of references to the 'Church of the poor' and to the need to struggle against a world governed by money. Its adoption is immediately banned by the Cardinal, but parts of it eventually appear at the Catholic University, where it is used to demand the end of Church control of the University and the abolition of the requirement that university entrants should be Catholics (Lumley 1983: 193).

2 December. Mazzi and his two assistants, Sergio Gomito and Paolo Caciolli, together with a group of parishioners, visit the Cardinal to attempt a reconciliation, but to no avail. Their language is respectful, but they do not fail to make a verbatim record of the conversation, which they will eventually publish (CdI 1969: 243–59).

4 December. Mazzi receives the Curia's Decree of Removal from the post of parish priest. In its *Notiziario* of 5 December, the

Community responds: 'The pastor has been attacked to disperse his flock. The flock will not be dispersed' (CdI 1969: 262). The attempts of influential local churchmen to mediate have now failed; indeed, as the conflict progresses, positions become more crystallized, outsiders have chosen sides, and the two actors become more and more polarized. The community and the Cardinal move towards confrontation.

Collective Action

5 December. The community reacts to the Cardinal's letter with a strike in the elementary and middle schools of the neighbourhood. The effort is community-wide: even boy scouts help to ensure participation by offering baby-sitting services (CdI 1969: 263). In the afternoon, the children, their parents, and some of the teachers march through the streets of downtown Florence. They carry posters reading:

> What are the people of the Church—Everything!
> What do we count for—nothing!
> What should we count for—Something!

They stand in silence in front of the Curia and pray for Cardinal Florit. At the end, they deposit their posters in front of the cathedral, recite a *Padre nostro*, and move off towards the church of Santa Maria Novella, chanting 'You can fire a priest, but not a people' (CdI 1969: 265).

6 December. The Cardinal's delegate, Monsignor Panerei, appears in the Isolotto to say mass in response to what he claims is a cry of the faithful. He is greeted by a sullen crowd and placards that read, 'To content fifty, you have offended ten thousand!' (Baldelli 1969: 141). After what the community describes as 'a long colloquy of over two hours with the people', Panerei is 'persuaded' not to continue the mass and he retires (CdI 1971: 110).

7 December. At an assembly in the Isolotto church, a group of 'outsiders' is detected. They are forced to leave and the fact is publicized in a new letter to the Cardinal. On 8 December, mass is cancelled and, under a heavy rain, a long line of people weaves down the main streets of Florence, after passing through the poorer quarters along the Arno. In front of the Curia, another 'Our Father' is read. The march is observed by policemen in plain clothes (CdI 1969: 276). The outsiders, it is discovered, were not mere curiosity-seekers: calling themselves the Catholic Anticommunist Movement, they will eventually try to have five of the demonstrators indicted for 'promoting unauthorized demonstrations' and 'vilification of the state religion' (*Nazione*, 27 May 1968).

20 December. The conflict has not gone unnoticed in the highest places. Don Mazzi gets a letter over the Pope's signature calling for a reconciliation with the Cardinal before Christmas. The three priests, together with a group of parishioners, go off to Rome to seek an audience with the pontiff. They are received by Monsignor Benelli, then substitute Vatican secretary of state, who says the Pope is indisposed and asks for a retraction, which they still refuse to give (*Nazione*, 22 Dec.: 15; CdI 1969: 281–94).

Christmas eve. Since Mazzi's removal, mass has been offered by a priest from the Curia in a small chapel outside the neighbourhood (CdI 1969: 279–80). A delegate from the Cardinal now arrives in the Isolotto with a functionary from the Curia and another from the prefecture (this is the first time the state has been actively involved) to take over the church. Don Mazzi is absent, so the transfer cannot be effected, but they promise to return the next day—which happens to be the day on which Christ was born (*Nazione*, 27 Dec.: 11).

Christmas day. The church is packed with neighbourhood residents, many of whom are not normally worshippers but have come to support Don Mazzi. Passages from the Bible are read but, in protest against the hierarchy's actions, no mass is celebrated. That evening, a prayer vigil is held in the *piazza* in front of the church (Taurini 1968: 813).

Sunday, 29 December. Monsignor Alba, who has been sent by the Cardinal to celebrate mass, enters a church packed with almost a thousand of Mazzi's supporters. He is accompanied by the Cardinal's delegate and—amazingly—by people recognized as militants of the neo-fascist party. These people surround the priest protectively and respond to the mass in loud voices, while Mazzi's supporters, who symbolically turn their backs to the altar, read the Bible. Leaders of the community form a kind of *cordon sanitaire* between their followers and Alba's bodyguards to prevent an incident from occurring inside the church. They chant loudly over the voice of the priest: 'To celebrate the mass in these conditions is a sacrilege, an offence, a challenge, a provocation' (CdI 1971: 111–14; *L'Unità*, 30 Dec. 1968). The same day, an official of the neo-fascist MSI goes to court to denounce the interruption of the mass (CdI 1971: 115–16).

The open presence of the extreme Right makes it impossible for the Left to keep silent any longer. By the next morning, posters signed by the Communist, Socialist and left-wing Socialist (PSIUP) parties appear on the walls of the city, denouncing the presence of the police in the Isolotto and warning that the democratic and anti-fascist forces of the city will not tolerate Fascist provocation (CdI 1971: 120–1).

31 December. The church is formally transferred to the curia (*Nazione*, 2 Jan. 1969). This is followed on New Year's Day by a gathering in Rome outside St. Peter's to protest against the hierarchy's action and to demand reforms in the Church (*Corriere*, 2 Jan. 1969). The Isolotto incident has entered a turbulent national conflict structure which divides Left and Right, clerical and anticlerical, and—almost—Church and State. Questions are raised in Parliament and a long judicial battle begins, a battle that will keep the issue in the news for over a year.

4 January 1969. In the presence of representatives of religious communities from Turin, Ravenna and other Florentine neighbourhoods (Sciubba and Pace 1976: 99), another assembly is held at which the decision is reached to obstruct future attempts of the Curia to hold mass in the Isolotto (CdI 1969: 319). The community maintains that 'the people of the Isolotto have been rejected by the bishop and believe that at this point the mass would only serve to hypocritically disguise this rejection' (CdI 1969: 277). That night, a right-wing group calling itself the 'Florentine Action Squad' tears down left-wing wall posters and nails a manifesto to the door of the church (CdI 1971: 123–24) It reads:

Long live the Army;
Long live the Forces of order;
Long live Italy!

Through a sequence of actions and reactions between the community and the church hierarchy, and by the successive involvement of the press and of external allies and enemies who help polarize the struggle and provide an active audience for a broader ideological message, a conflict between a neighbourhood church and its bishop has crystallized into a national social movement. Through the winter and spring of 1969, action would move to the courts, as the incidents of December and January are adjudicated—to the ultimate satisfaction of the community.[16] But the collective action that would put its permanent stamp on the movement—symbolizing the claims of the people confronted by an unjust authority and providing the movement with an organizational form for the future—is still to come.

III THE MASS IN THE *PIAZZA*

May 1969. The first move comes when Cardinal Florit names two new priests to the Isolotto, both to take office the following February. But he does not dare to open the church yet, lest there be a repetition of the events of the previous winter (*Nazione*, 28 May 1969: 6). One of the new priests remarks, in the accents of the Veneto, that 'there is nothing Christian and nothing religious' in the experience of the Isolotto community (Taurini 1969*b*: 531).

July 1969. The loyalists decide to pray in the public *piazza* in front of the parish church. They invite a priest from the nearby diocese of Prato to hold a mass there (*Corriere*, 11 July 1969; Taurini 1969*b*: 531). The Cardinal responds by threatening suspension *a divinis* to any priest who accepts the invitation (Taurini 1969*b*: 532). The community responds that its priests will continue to refuse to celebrate mass but that it will welcome 'all those who want to bear witness among us (even if it subjects them to persecution) to the Church which has its foundation in the spirit of Christ' (Taurini 1969*b*: 533–4).

Negotiations drag on through the summer between leaders of the community and the cardinal's representatives. Florit at one point invites Don Mazzi and his assistants to come and live with him in the Curia. In early August, things seem on the mend, as a group of progressive churchmen meeting at Camaldoli try to effect a reconciliation (Taurini 1969*b*: 538–40). 'Who is the father', they ask the Cardinal, 'who, when his sons ask him for bread, gives them a stone?'[17]

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[16] On 14 Jan. the Attorney General sent an indictment to eleven lay people and five priests for 'istigazione a delinquere', when they had publicly obstructed the mass in early Dec. (*Nazione*, 15 Jan.). In response, over a thousand people signed a letter claiming co-responsibility for the boycott (CdI 1971: 133). Although the legal wrangling went on for months, keeping the case in the national news and leading to protests around the country, the Church and its supporters got little satisfaction from the judiciary. The six organizers of the 5 Dec. demonstration were absolved on the request of the Ministry of Justice, (*Nazione*, 24 May). Of the 438 signers of the 'co-responsibility' letter, most were amnestied and the rest—five priests and four lay people—were eventually absolved (*Nazione*, 6 July; *L'Unità*, 6 July).

[17] At least one of these distinguished churchmen believes that neither side wanted a reconciliation, since the compromise offered at Camaldoli was rejected by both (interview with Ernesto Balducci, 18 Nov. 1985).

30 August. But while these negotiations are going on, the Cardinal shocks both supporters and opponents by announcing that the next day he will appear in the neighbourhood, reopen the church, and celebrate a mass himself. The community responds at a midnight meeting with a hastily prepared declaration warning the Cardinal that his action would be irreversible: they also hold an all-night vigil outside the Curia. When, the next morning, the declaration is read to him, the Cardinal (in the memoir published by the community) responds:

> This document is a Marxist treatise. You are not a Christian community . . .. You are outside the Church because you are against me . . .. Whoever is against his own bishop is outside the Church . . .. Have the courage to admit that you have left the Church. (Taurini 1969*b*: 547)

Sunday, 31 August. At ten a.m., the *piazza* in front of the church of the Isolotto begins to fill up. As the Cardinal's uncompromising letter is read aloud, the crowd responds with outrage. A unanimous decision is taken not to enter the church during the celebration of his mass. At 11 a.m., the Cardinal arrives, protected by both plain-clothes and uniformed policemen, and enters the church which, by now, has several hundred traditionalists within. When the mass is over and Florit passes through the *piazza*, he is greeted only by silence. A fast is held until evening (*Nazione*, 1 Sept.).

The Cardinal's *coup de main* is roundly condemned by Florence's Catholic community—including, among others, the influential theologian, Ernesto Balducci (Taurini 1969*b*: 551–4). The permanent suspension of the three priests has now become inevitable, and they and their loyal supporters move their activities definitively outside the church. On the following Sunday, in the presence of over a thousand people, a priest from a religious community in Turin performs a baptism and celebrates a mass on the *piazza* (Taurini 1969: 557).

Every Sunday since then, an assembly has been held on the *piazza* outside the church of the Isolotto. The 'mass' in the *piazza* follows a well-established routine. When we observed it in 1985, Enzo Mazzi or his close collaborator, Sergio Gomito, would begin with a general address; then a topic that had been 'prepared' and discussed at a regular Thursday evening assembly was presented—often with the participation of friendly, and usually highly political, outside groups. A discussion was organized. There followed general announcements and, finally, the 'religious' part of the assembly was held, in which the host was offered to all who wished to partake of it.

The mass in the *piazza*—first celebrated all those years ago as a deliberate provocation to unjust authority—became the central symbol and organizing principle of the community's life and meaning. Repeating it every Sunday re-consecrates the group, allows it to continue to attract both disillusioned church members and others, and provides it with a forum in which a variety of issues can be aired. It is participatory, provocative, and expressive; but it is also planned, strategic, and institutionalized. It re-evokes in ritualized form the community's initial encounter with unjust authority, it embodies the solidarity of the group, and it makes its host available to others.

IV RELIGION, POLITICS, AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Like many 'new' social movements, the members of the Isolotto community claim that they avoid partisan commitments and vigorously deny that their work is in any way political. But by late 1969 Mazzi and his supporters were aiming their activities at familiar social movement targets outside the Church. For example, on 28 November 1969, they arrived early one morning at a plot of overgrown land on the outskirts of town. They lit a bonfire, set up a large poster reading 'Dancing, no; School, yes!' and cooked breakfast for themselves and for neighbourhood curiosity seekers. The land had been chosen as the site of a nightclub by the municipal administration. Mazzi and his followers demanded that a school be built there instead (*Corriere*, 29 Nov. 1969).

In at least three ways, the experience of the Isolotto community was part of a national cycle of political protest:

First, during this period, there was a new frame of meaning circulating in Italian society in which the themes of autonomy and resistance to authority were widely diffused. This new interpretative frame spread into the Church. Even the tactics used against the Cardinal—the assembly, the vigil, counter-information—were the same ones as those which were being used against university administrators throughout the country.

Second, the movement's tactical positions, its alliances, and the opposition to it were political too. In addition to recruiting support from the progressive La Pira wing of the DC, the community's protests attracted support from Communist and Socialist militants, and from small but growing circles of extreme leftists, some of whom will later appear in the movement organizations of the early 1970s.[18]

Finally, it was through a political process of mobilization, interaction, and confrontation that the Isolotto community was transformed into a social movement. The unintended role of the conservative press, especially the *Nazione*, in diffusing word of the conflict has already been noted. Even more important was the political unity that the community gained from its conflict with the Church.[19] The Isolotto experience was further politicized by the efforts of outside groups to gain political advantage from it.

The story of religious dissent in Italy illustrates the influence of a cycle of protest on a pre-existing movement. In its course, the Isolotto activists gained social support from workers, students, and non-religious neighbourhood residents. They attracted political allies from among people who had their own particular grievances. And they employed the tactics they had learned from the student movement. In the process, their own message was transformed and secularized from the narrow right to participate in Church affairs to autonomy from unjust authority, and they constructed a broader identity. In cycles of protest, even old movements within the oldest institutions become new.

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[18] Baldelli, for example, eventually became 'responsible' editor of *Lotta Continua*.

[19] As one member of the community said, 'You have to recognize that the Cardinal did all he could to unite us; he smoothed our path' (Il Ponte 1971: 638).

Part Three

ORGANIZERS AND MOVEMENTS

9

THE EXTRAPARLIAMENTARY GROUPS: DIFFUSION, ORGANIZATION, COMPETITION

THE preceding chapters have shown how three different movements formed around the conflicts of ordinary people who used their internal resources and political opportunities to oppose their demands to concrete opponents. But social movements are *not only* composed of ordinary people protesting on behalf of their concrete demands against those who exercise authority over them. From the beginning, they include those who attempt to mobilize and organize them, to merge their demands with those of others through broader frames of reference, to turn their energies against targets that go beyond their immediate opponents. From the beginning, there are social movement organizers.

A popular school of sociological thought—much in debt to Weber and to Michels—sees organization as antithetical to movements, for, it is said, consciousness smothers spontaneity. For writers in this school, movements are a 'mysterious spark' which enables the mass to 'cross the threshold of organizational life' (Lowi 1971: 40). Movements are marked by expressive actions, emergent norms and infectious enthusiasm; and much less by political calculation and the defence of their members' interests.

For this school of thought, organization does nothing but routinize and suffocate movements. On this view, as a movement 'attains an economic and social base in the society, as the original charismatic leadership is replaced, a bureaucratic structure emerges and a general accommodation to the society occurs' (Zald and Garner 1987: 121).

Zald and Garner are sceptical of this view; for them the process of institutionalization is neither so inevitable nor so linear. They break down the concept of institutionalization into three aspects—goal transformation, organizational maintenance, and oligarchization—and argue that each can occur at a different rate and combine with other processes to encourage and increase, rather than discourage and diminish, radicalization (1987: 122).

Recent research takes us further from the Weber–Michels view. First, even the 'spontaneity' that has frequently been observed among emergent social movements may take an organizational form. For example, Rosenthal and Schwartz argue that organization and spontaneity are 'neither discontinuous nor opposed'. Indeed, they say, it is characteristic of certain types of groups to use spontaneity as their typical organizational form (Rosenthal and Schwartz 1987: 2). We saw examples of this in Chapter 6 in the university students' movement and in the last chapter in the Isolotto.

We shall return to the inevitability of institutionalization in Chapter 12. In this chapter, I shall develop an argument prior to, but consistent with, those of Zald and Garner and Rosenthal and Schwartz: that before we begin to analyse the institutionalization of social movements, we must first be aware of the role that organization plays in their formation and diffusion. If a social movement *arises* spontaneously, then organizations may indeed be an institutionalizing force as they try to take it over and channel it. But what of movements that are the *product* of mobilization campaigns led by organizations? In that case, the movement's development is likely to be very different from the process that earlier students detected. Where organizations are present from the beginning, they themselves may be a disruptive—and not an institutionalizing—force, because they use protest to diffuse their influence.

Organization can be present in the rise of social movements in three different ways: first, in the institutional context within which protest occurs—the organization of everyday life or that provided by 'host' institutions; second, through external groups that attempt to organize collective action; and third, through the very forms that collective action takes, forms that frequently become the template of future movement organization. This is not to argue that no creativity is involved in the formation of social movements; but only that what often passes for spontaneity is in fact the volatile product of interactions between an organization, its mass base, and its institutional context.

Second, however variable their role in the formation of protest movements, organizations are crucial to their diffusion. Groups with pre-existing organizations and those that emerge during the emergent phase of a protest movement can both take advantage of its diffusion to increase their influence. The connection between the diffusion of protest and the organization of social movements may be even more intimate: since movement organizations generally lack the material incentives to attract new members and diffuse their message, they use the diffusion of protest to do these things.

The image of diffusion in writings on collective action is often like that of a wave that spreads in ripples from the epicentre of an earthquake to its periphery. But this image is too automatic and too regular. Even in the eighteenth century, the diffusion of grain riots was never like a wave, for it followed the main lines of communication and transportation.[1] In the nineteenth century, with the appearance of organized national social movements, diffusion became a more purposive process. Organizers recognized that they needed to diffuse protest in order to gain support, and to do so they expanded their organizations. Thus organization, far from being antithetical to movements, was in fact central to the diffusion of their most characteristic activity—protest.

There is a third connection between protest and organization: in the competition between social movement organizations. Only rarely is the social movement sector monopolized by a single organization (Zald and Garner 1987: 127). More commonly, several groups form at about the same time and around the same issues, and compete for support from among the same constituencies. What forms does their competition take? Ideological competition is one; another is competition for media attention. With time, and especially as mobilization ceases to expand, movement organizations increasingly compete for supporters by using new and more innovative forms of collective action. The process of competitive tactical innovation by social movement organizations, I shall argue, is a major force in the diffusion of protest.

The brief history of the Italian extraparliamentary groups illustrates all three processes. Many rehearsed in theory the Leninist theme of 'What is to be done?' while operating in practice like the debating societies Lenin criticized. Others dedicated themselves mainly to diffusion of their views, at first through dog-eared *opuscoli* and *manifestini* but increasingly through books and journals. The most successful directed their efforts at diffusing the struggle begun in 1967–8 to new supporters through protest. To carry on these activities, they needed organization. The function of organization, then, was not to smother and routinize protest but to reproduce it and make it a more effective weapon.

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[1] See, for example, Georges Rudé (1981) for an excellent analysis of the path of the spread of grain seizures in the Île de France in the 1770s. In factory conflicts in Italy, as Lumley points out, the directions in which the conflict spread were often determined by the integrated nature of production (1983: 374 ff.).

Many of the protest events spread like a brushfire at the grassroots of Italian society; others were more clearly organized; many—like the Isolotto events—were the outcome of a combination of spontaneity and organization. If there was a fundamental change after 1968, it was that there were now many more groups forming around the country, competing for support, and trying to diffuse mobilization to new sectors.

The competition among these groups is easily seen in the printed record. They argued at length in discursive assemblies and congresses, which one group would sometimes abandon when its positions were defeated (Bobbio 1979: 52). They attacked one another in newspapers, pamphlets and handbills filled with condemnations of the errors of their comrades, and sometimes on the streets (Sofri 1985: 91). But the most important field for their competition was in diffusing protest into new areas and sectors, where they could demonstrate their prowess, their energy, and their support for the claims of the social actors they favoured.

Intergroup competition crossed three main axes: between social movement organizations on the same side of the general social and political conflict; between left- and right-wing organizations on opposite sides of a conflict; and between movement organizations and institutional groups such as parties or unions. As the number of new groups grew and the 'market' for social movement activity shrank, organizers tried to outbid one another in competing for support. The result was an increasing intensity of conflict within the social movement sector. Its final expression would be the organized violence at the end of the cycle.

In this chapter, I shall first outline some major mechanisms of protest diffusion and specify the role that organizations played within them. Next, I shall look at the role of the press—both 'bourgeois' and movement—in the diffusion of protest. I shall then turn to the organizational development of the major extra-parliamentary groups on the extreme left. Finally, I shall test the notion that organization, and the competition between movement organizations, were direct corollaries to the diffusion of collective action.

I SPONTANEOUS AND PURPOSIVE DIFFUSION

To a great extent, the early diffusion of protest was visibly spontaneous: students would go home to their provincial towns for the weekend and bring the message of the student movement with them; immigrant workers would do the same in their southern villages when they went home on vacation; prison revolts took their traditional form of issueless riots; commuters blocked train tracks when delays in their trains made them late for work; people without proper homes would occupy unsold private houses and demand their municipalization; young people would protest the cost of bus tickets or rock concerts by wrestling their way in for free.

But even these 'spontaneous' acts were often diffused by purposive means. The prison riots soon manifested that they could only with difficulty be called spontaneous. The tactic of the blocking trains was picked up by organized groups to gain publicity for their grievances. Housing occupations were eventually organized by extraparliamentary groups. And people who 'self-reduced' bus fares or utility payments were consciously applying to a new context one of the most effective weapons of shopfloor insurgency (Lumley 1983; Comitato Unitario di Base 1969). Let us first survey some of the most common processes of diffusion before turning to the role of organization within them.

Processes of Diffusion

Protest was diffused through imitation, comparison, the transfer of forms and themes of protest from one sector to another, and direct reaction on the part of those whose interests had been affected by earlier protests. These are the processes that most closely resemble what classical theorists regard as spontaneous. A brief look at some examples of these mechanisms will provide a sense of their distinctive characteristics and how they could operate.

Imitation

The simplest form of diffusion was when people copied the forms and themes of protest they learned about from others. What the press called 'microconflictuality' seemed to spread rapidly across Italian society, through absenteeism, petty theft, insolence, acts of industrial sabotage, and a general unwillingness to take no for an answer. The rent strikes that swept Milan's public housing projects from 1968 onwards were an example of imitation; the presence of organizers alone could not explain the rapidity and extent of the phenomenon (Sbragia 1974: 266).

Protest spread even where no obvious communication mechanisms existed, for example, in the prisons, where a wave of revolt carried protest into the most isolated corner of Italian society. How could separate groups of uneducated and unorganized prisoners learn to use the same forms of protest—setting fires and going up to the roofs of their jails—except through a jungle telegraph at the base of Italian society? Imitation is the most likely origin for the rapid diffusion of this kind of behaviour.

Comparison

A related mechanism was comparison: there were continual catch-up strikes (Regalia, Regini, and Reyneri 1978) by groups of workers who had lost their comparative wage advantage when the demands of other workers were met; and protests by office workers in factories whose manual workers were closing the salary gap they had enjoyed. Even in formerly unorganized small firms and peripheral regions, there were strikes to catch up with salary concessions that had been won from big firms in the Industrial Triangle. Diffusion by comparison, like diffusion by imitation, required only that people read the newspapers or learn by word of mouth what other groups had gained by striking.

Transfer of tactics

Protest was also diffused by the transfer of a successful tactic from one sector or region to another. Some tactics were applicable only to the institutional site in which they arose, but most could leapfrog from sector to sector or from one region to another. We saw in Chapter 8 how the tactics of the Catholic student movement were applied in the very different context of the Isolotto parish. To take a more specific example: railway line blockades, such as the one in Pisa in May 1968, were also used repeatedly, under varying circumstances. In March 1969, for example, students in Reggio Calabria used it as one of the first recorded acts of protest in what would become a violent revolt against the institution of the new regional governments (Malafarina *et al.* 1972: 5).

Direct reaction

Protest was also diffused by the reaction of one group to the actions of another whose protests had adversely affected its interests. The counter-demonstrations in Genoa when shipyard workers in Trieste went on strike over shipyard closings were one of many instances of diffusion by reaction. Another occurred during the national debate on divorce: the demonstrations of pro-divorce groups in front of Parliament triggered a smaller series of anti-divorce protests by right-wing Catholics. And in Reggio Calabria, demonstrations to demand that the new regional capital be located there provoked counter-demonstrations in Catanzaro, which was slated to receive it.

Purposive Diffusion

The competition of Reggio Calabria and Catanzaro for the new regional government illustrates the inadequacy of the view that protest was diffused spontaneously. For although in both cities, many of the acts of disruption were spontaneous, these acts occurred in the context of well-organized political campaigns and soon attracted movement organizers. For example, the 'revolt' of Reggio was touched off when the city's mayor called a meeting to protest at the impending allocation of the capital to Catanzaro (Malafarina 1972). And once the revolt exploded, it rapidly attracted 'a management from the Right' (Ferraris 1970).

The forms of protest that have been described above sometimes arose spontaneously, but they did not leap automatically from sector to sector or from region to region. They were most often diffused by organizers using the experiences and organizational skills they had acquired in the course of earlier campaigns to give force and consistency to protest in others. The diffusion of protest had a powerful organizational component from the start. Three types of organizational diffusion can be discerned.

Diffusion by interest group

Some of the organizations responsible for the diffusion of protest were traditional interest associations that began to lend their resources to protest as its advantages became known and as they were increasingly challenged by new movement organizations. As early as 1967, when doctors' associations organized strikes against the health insurance system, it was the unions that, in the absence of associations of patients, first responded. As pension reform found a place on the legislative agenda, associations of retired people, as well as unions, entered the lists. The unions' interest in pensions was constant throughout the period, and was rewarded by positions on the governing bodies of the new health insurance agencies.

The unions also took up the issue of housing and other urban issues, demanding better housing and improved services for the workers and organizing tenants' unions in all the major cities (Daniele 1978; Alemanni *et al.* 1974). And, as lower-class urban dwellers and extreme Left groups took up the cause of better housing by staging aggressive building occupations, the political Left also formed its own tenants' union, the SUNIA, which used more institutionalized tactics to gain some of the same ends.

In yet another area of controversy, the Divorce League, a moderate group of mainly Republican and Socialist militants which had patiently sought divorce legislation for years, began in the late 1960s to engage in disruptive pro-divorce protests. Its insistent agitation for reform eventually forced the Communists, always worried about the Catholic electorate, to take a more aggressive stance vis-à-vis divorce. The cycle of protest extended the social movement sector to include traditional 'old' social movements.

Diffusion within host institutions

Protest also spread within institutions—often against their will, as in the case of the Church. The trade unions—particularly traditionally leftist ones like the metalworkers—also served as institutional hosts for insurgents in regions where workerism was a more powerful force than party affiliation (Golden 1988). And even in the Communist party, insurgents such as the Manifesto group tried to use their position in the party to publicize their views, until they were excluded in 1969.

The prison system provides another example of the ways in which institutions involuntarily contributed to the spread of protest. In order to stop the revolts that had begun in places such as Turin's Le Nuove prison or Milan's San Vittore and to punish rebelling prisoners by separating them from their families, the authorities would transfer them to other jails around the country. As a result, themes and forms of action that had first appeared in the North were diffused to jails in central and southern Italy. The agents of diffusion were not only the extraparliamentary militants imprisoned for illegal political activity but 'common' prisoners transferred to Volterra or Poggioreale as punishment for participating in a prison revolt (Invernizzi 1973).

Diffusion by movement organizations

The most dramatic means by which protest was diffused was through the new movement organizations that emerged from the university students' movement in 1968 and 1969. These movements directed their attention to the factory in particular, but because they found the unions already ensconced there, they also turned to the environment, to occupational threats to health and safety, to the hospitals and asylums, to draftees in the army, and especially to the city. Nothing more effectively refutes the charge of 'utopianism' levelled against the student movement than the fact that its former militants took up the concrete causes of discontent that plagued Italian society: inadequate housing and urban services, rampant building speculation, the lack of community health clinics and day care centres, outdated hospitals, and inhuman prison conditions.

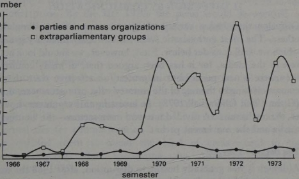

Fig. 9.1 Presence of extraparliamentary groups and of parties and party mass organizations, 1966–73.

A summary measure of the growing importance of these groups after 1968 is found in Figure 9.1, where their presence in the newspaper reports is traced for each semester in the eight-year period. Although they seldom appeared in the reports in 1966–7, they increased sharply in 1968, declined briefly in early 1969, but began a general increase in late 1969, to peak in early 1972 and then begin a secular decline.[2]

[2] Although the movement organizations increased their presence in the protest events of early 1973, by the second half of that year they had begun the decline which led some in the direction of the party system and others to embrace organized violence. Ch. 12 will examine these trends in detail.

The aggressive presence of these groups in protests from the end of 1968 frightened the bourgeois press and stimulated a backlash among the middle class (see Chapter 10). But they had a crucial element of weakness from the beginning: although their rise coincided with a continued expansion in the *number* of protests until 1971 (see Figure 3.1), it also coincided with a decline in the level of disruption, and particularly with a decline in the disruptiveness of working-class conflict (see Figure 7.2). The fundamental dilemma of the extraparliamentary Left was that the main social actor it claimed to represent was relapsing from its high point of mobilization just as they came on the scene to compete with the unions for its support. In this lie many of the contradictory trends that we shall find in the next three chapters.

II DIFFUSION BY COMMUNICATION

Diffusion thus had a variety of agents, some more willing than others. The most enthusiastic were the extraparliamentary groups, which we shall consider below. First, however, we should look at the role of the media, for it has been argued that, in many countries, they were a near-participant in protest, so effective were they in communicating to the rest of the country what protesters were doing (Gitlin 1980; Oberschall 1978). In assessing this argument, however, the media must be divided into two main sectors—the 'bourgeois' media and the movement press.

The bourgeois media

Although it was generally hostile to disruption, after 1968 the daily press often helped to disseminate word of new groups, symbols, and forms of protest throughout Italy. Press and live media reports were frequently unfair to protesters, thus provoking secondary protests against the RAI, the national radio and television network, or against newspaper offices, as in the protest we saw in Trieste. At first, newspapers buried information about protests deep on their inside pages.[3] But as the protest wave gathered strength, the press gave it more and more coverage. Why was this the case?

Developments in the press corps contributed something to the change. As the post-1968 generation of college graduates entered the job market, many chose journalism as a profession. Even the staffs of some of the mainline newspapers were renewed by people who had been in the movements in 1967–8 and could go after stories aggressively. In addition, journalists became increasingly aggressive in putting forward their own professional demands against management (Porter 1983: ch. 7). This could not help but increase their sympathy for other protesters.

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[3] For example, the first occupation of the Catholic University of Milan was reported in a tiny article on p.9 of the *Corriere della Sera* (16 Oct. 1967).

But even before this change in attitude, however, some kinds of protest events were avidly covered by the press. Violent events, those which inconvenienced the public, and those involving large groups of people could not be easily ignored. For example, although the conflicts at FIAT in the spring of 1969 were hushed up even by the respectable local paper *La Stampa*, in July, when a battle broke out between police and workers on Corso Triano (Bobbio 1979: 35), the dispute was too serious to ignore and had to be covered in the national press. By the late 1970s the press would be accused of collaborating with opponents of the state for publishing their press releases (LaPalombara 1987: 186–9).[4]

The movement press

The attitude of the mainline media could never be called 'fair' to the movements, if only because they ignored the substance of their demands and emphasized their violence. This had a crucial benefit to the movements, however, for it led them to rely on informal ties for communication and to found a movement press that enabled them to avoid the kind of enslavement to the bourgeois media that hamstrung the American new Left (Oberschall 1978).

The growing presence of new movement organizations was documented by the extraparliamentary groups' own newspaper and journal outlets. Where the mid-1960s had seen the emergence of 'little' journals and mimeographed factory newspapers, the years after 1968 saw the production of daily newspapers and well-produced journals. *Servire il Popolo, Avanguardia Operaia, La Classe, Il Manifesto*, and *Lotta Continua* were all founded during the year following the high point of mid-1968 (Bobbio 1979: 3). The *Manifesto*, run by the distinguished group that had been ejected from the PCI, was particularly successful in becoming a paper of national reputation.

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[4] Later the press was accused of complicity during the period of organized terrorism after 1976, but not during the period of mass protest before 1973, when it was hostile to protest. In the later period, as the Red Brigades and other terrorist organizations began to use the media to broadcast their messages, self-censorship by the press was requested by the government and demanded by conservative groups. The best treatment of this sensitive issue is Schlesinger (1981).

The movement newspapers were a major innovation that accelerated the diffusion of social protest. For example, *Il Manifesto*, which appealed to left-wing communists as well as anti-communist leftists, had a circulation well beyond the size of the groups' own membership. It thus helped to set the political agenda of the social movement sector, and was able to alert people to protests occurring in another part of the country, to the themes and forms of action used in those protests, and to the probable response of elites if they were copied. For a time, walking around with a copy of one of these newspapers in one's back pocket was a symbol of membership in the movement.

We cannot measure to what degree the 'spontaneous' spread of social protest was actually the result of the practical application by new groups of the tactics they read of in the newspapers. But from another angle, the impact of the changes in the press was clearer. They helped to launch a tradition of fruitful, if shrill, investigative journalism in a profession that had formerly got most of its news from official sources. For example, journalists for mainline newspapers, writing under pseudonyms, would sometimes publish articles in journals of the extraparliamentary Left that their own papers would refuse to publish.

No survey of the number of employees or the size of the readership of the movement press has ever been carried out (but see Becchelloni 1973). But, even without statistical evidence, we can see that the movement press was a major channel of communication between extraparliamentary groups and their supporters and gave them an independent outlet for the diffusion of the issues that their leaders wished to sponsor. The movement press had another function as well: despite its lack of professionalism, it provided jobs for people in the movement sector who needed to support themselves 'outside the system'.[5]

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[5] Two unsystematic, but striking, findings: first, the place of pride that publishing a newspaper held in the memories of many former movement leaders whom we interviewed; second, the large number in the mid-1980s who still earned at least part of their living from journalism.

III THE EXTRAPARLIAMENTARY LEFT

Between the 1967–8 and 1968–9 academic years, the number of what would come to be called 'extraparliamentary' organizations mushroomed. The public—which in 1967 and 1968 frequently heard only of the actions of unnamed 'contesters', 'anarchists', and 'Maoists'—now found the press full of reports of a variety of new organizations, each with a threatening title and revolutionary goals. Each major outbreak of mass protest or violence would be followed by background articles in the press surveying the groups on the extreme left or right and the ideologies they were supposed to represent.

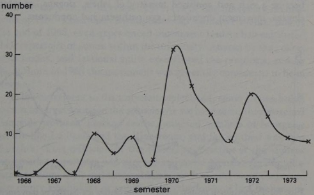

FIG. 9.2 Presence of extraparliamentary groups in cognate protest events, 1966–73.

The role of the extraparliamentary groups in diffusing protest can be seen indirectly in the 'cognate events' that we derived from the newspapers. Each time a newspaper report mentioned one protest as either causing, being affected by, or having been organized in conjunction with another, it was listed as a 'cognate event'. Over the course of the protest wave, 18 per cent of the events were directly related to other events in this way. In Figure 9.2, the number of these events in which extraparliamentary groups were present is plotted over the eight-year period for which the *Corriere* data were collected. The curve shows that the extraparliamentary groups were already deeply involved in the diffusion of protest soon after their appearance in 1969.

Sometimes several extraparliamentary groups would cooperate in organizing joint demonstrations, as in the series of anti-fascist and anti-repression protests that were held after 1969. Sometimes they would compete with one another and with the institutional Left, as a peaceful demonstration led by one group would be invaded by another. People would often go from the demonstration of one group to those of another. Increasingly, extreme left- and extreme right-wing groups attacked one another's headquarters or engaged in physical confrontations in the streets; occasionally, there was even physical conflict within the Left. The social movement sector became a rich and confused tapestry of labels, slogans, counter-slogans, movement organizers, sympathisers and opponents.

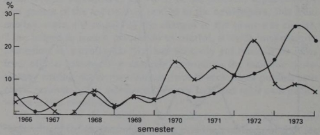

Fig. 9.3 Proportion of protest events whose causes are parties or movement organizations, 1966–73.

These developments were richly reported in both the movement and the bourgeois press and seemed to signal an expansion and increased activity of the social movement sector. But many of the activities reported were directed at other groups and parties *within* the social movement sector. Figure 9.3 provides evidence for this: it charts over time the proportion of protests in which the source of the grievances (i.e. their cause) was either a political party or a movement organization. Both kinds of 'internal' conflicts rose sharply after 1969, particularly as the extreme Right launched a provocative campaign of attacks against the Left, and continued to rise until 1973.

Organization as the Outcome of Crisis

What explains the emergence of the organized extraparliamentary Left in 1969–70? The answer lies in two major factors: organization was both the outcome of crisis and the result of a new opportunity. Both crisis and opportunity affected the two major elements in the student movement, radical students and movement organizers, but in different ways. Let us look at each of these factors in turn.

'By the summer of 1968', writes Luigi Bobbio, 'the student wave of the previous winter and spring had used up its disruptive capacity' and 'the major pre-existing political formations in the student and youth world were all in crisis' (1979: 3-4). The university occupations of 1967–8 had been enthusiastic and formative events. But by the end of 1968, even experienced movement leaders had exhausted their repertoire of action within the university. Attacks by the police, suspensions, and factional splits exacerbated the problems, and by the autumn of 1968 the movement was generally considered to be in crisis.

As the movement in the universities declined, some groups began to turn to targets outside the schools. As we have seen, they marched alongside workers, blocked traffic, attacked symbols of bourgeois culture like La Scala and the Rinascente, and forced their way into churches. This diffusion of the themes and tactics of the student movement to new sites was exciting and could be creative. But once detached from their institutional bases, such efforts could evaporate into empty symbolism or pointless destruction and laid the groups open to the attacks of opponents.

There was a big difference between occupying university buildings and demonstrating in the streets. In the former case, the ebullience of the students could be turned to constructive activities, but in the latter, they were more likely to strike out blindly at the police, who could attack a street demonstration more effectively than an occupation in the protected precincts of a university. For movement leaders, the only solution to these problems was organization.

Beginning in the fall of 1968, a series of conferences and debates was held to plan the movement's future. The most important took place in Venice in September 1968. Even at this early date, the shift to organization was far advanced; although participants still spoke in the singular of 'the movement', it was, as Bobbio remembers, 'perhaps the last moment in which debate was organized around the assumption of common membership. After that, there was an increasing push towards organization', arising in part from 'the new prospects that the class situation clearly seemed to offer' (Bobbio 1979: 4).

Organization as a Response to Opportunity

What were these new prospects that 'the class situation seemed to offer'? The movement's main hope was for an increase in working-class insurgency. As the national contract renewals in heavy industry approached in the spring of 1969, every minority group on the left was watching for signs of industrial conflict, aware of the possibility that the movement might find a new social base and terrain for action.[6] Their sense of opportunity was enhanced by the poor showing that the unions had made in previous contract talks and by the uncertainty of the Communist line towards working class militance as the PCI continued to seek middle-class support.

As we saw in Chapter 7, from the spring of 1968 small groups of workers—sometimes against the advice of union leaders—had been engaging in wildcat strikes, disruptive actions outside their factories, and the 'self-reduction' of assembly line production. And, as we also saw, the most combative of these actions occurred in factories in which the unions were weak or had made tactical errors. Radical students, militating outside these factories, could easily mistake working-class insurgents as being *anti*-union and, by extension, as ripe for revolutionary organization. The extremist rhetoric, the radical forms of action, and the anti-institutional thrust of the workers' protests seemed to follow the tracks of what they had accomplished in the previous academic year.

For example, like the students, who had shattered the authority of teachers and student associations in the previous year, insurgent workers were breaking with traditions of deference towards both bosses and unions (Regalia, Regini, and Reyneri 1978). Not only did they use the occupation but, like the students who had set up alternative classes, they seemed to be 'practising the objective' of taking charge of a process that had previously dominated them. In Milan, for instance, the Pirelli workers practised the objective of slowing down the assembly line to implement the change in piece-work rates they wanted.

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[6] This alertness to the impending contract renewals and their implication for the possibility of founding worker-based revolutionary groups was mentioned in the recollections of virtually every former leader interviewed in the study.

Those who had been organizing on the left since before the student movement never mistook the ebullience of the students for class conflict and welcomed the workers' revolt as more likely to attack the capitalist productive process at its core. Just as the student movement was waning, the working class presented them with a more authentic revolutionary opportunity. At the Venice meeting of September 1968, a number of people argued that the movement would need to transcend 'studentism' and become directly involved in factory conflicts if it were to survive.[7]

Although the attitude of the radical students towards the workers differed from that of the minority groups on the left, their ultimate goals coincided. Students, enthused by the apparent parallels between their own movement and the workers', and beginning to understand that the class struggle needed a solid institutional base, gladly carried the burden of mobilization to the factory gates. Movement organizers, taking advantage of the unions' moderation, attempted to penetrate the working class using their own political skills and the students' enthusiasm and readiness for sacrifice to convince the workers that they had substantial allies outside the unions. The concurrence of the end of the university-based student movement with the outbreak of industrial conflict, in the presence of experienced movement organizers, produced the extraparliamentary Left.

IV ORGANIZATION AS PROCESS

But the movement organizations could not simply shift from one social group to the other without some cost, and those which attempted to do so without organizing for it either disappeared or degenerated into ideological sects. Groups that wanted to make serious assaults against the unions needed to combine the student movement's enthusiasm with the workers' discipline. This realization had a powerful impact on the forms of organization they chose. Although some groups rapidly fell into a kind of super-Leninism under the guise of Maoism or other labels, the most successful looked for forms of organization that would unite the particular strengths of the student movement with those of the workers. As in many new movement organizations, and for good strategic reasons, the extraparliamentary Left was born under the sign of spontaneity.

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[7] 'Studentism' was a favourite criticism levelled by the Potere Operaio group against its competitors.

What kinds of organizational forms did the new groups assume? There was a good deal of variation around the norm, but that norm was strongly influenced by the experience of 1967–8 and by its anti-authoritarian heritage. Thus, although the process of movement organization was 'guided by cadres who were formed before 1968', most of the new organizations created in 1968–9 'accentuated practice and direct action over theoretical elaboration and affirmation of principle' (Bobbio 1979: 4). The most successful organizations were decentralized and provisional, leaving great scope for factions and for uncontrolled violence to develop.

Elaborate formulas were created to disguise even the degree of central control that was contemplated. Some groups were in theory so decentralized that they could admit no leaders. In others, leadership was exerted in so personalistic a way that it would be be impossible to assign responsibility for decisions. Some groups rapidly shook off this movementist heritage, while others had been suspicious of it from the beginning. But the most successful attempted to incorporate it into their organizations to prevent their decay into ideological sects or their degeneration into bureaucracies. Such a synthesis was the only way to preserve the heritage of 1968 in the context of a more serious revolutionary struggle.

Organization not only developed to take advantage of the 'new class situation'; it was also necessary to compete with other groups. Competition crossed three major axes: between the extraparliamentary Left and the parties of Left and Right; between movements and unions; and within the extreme Left itself.

Competing with the Party System

There was a major difference between the political atmosphere of 1967–8 and that of 1969–70: the role of the Communists. In the earlier period, the PCI's reformism had provided the new groups with an opportunity to outflank its youth organizations; but now it began to pose them a strategic dilemma. If everything went according to plan, the PCI—faced by a wave of mass protest—would reveal its revisionist colours and act as *gendarme* of the capitalist state.

More than one theorist of the new movements predicted such an outcome.

But the PCI would not play to such a convenient scenario—at least not until after 1973. At its 1969 congress, the party secretary Enrico Berlinguer responded to the new turbulence in Italian society with a more aggressive line. The PCI, he seemed to be saying, would not abandon the working class to its young left-wing rivals.[8] Moreover, once the new groups began to try to penetrate its working-class bastions, the PCI responded with classical Leninist determination. At the crudest level, extraparliamentary leftists who tried to break into Communist-led demonstrations found themselves facing a *servizio d'ordine* drawn from the toughest factory workers. The party's organization was radically overhauled, and old stalwarts were summarily retired and replaced with young militants right out of university. Even the FGCI, recovering from its deep crisis in the late 1960s, began to regain support among young people.

The PCI was not the only party whose fortunes revived after 1968. Increasingly, resentment against the violence (mainly rhetorical) fomented by the students and the disruption (mostly limited to the factory) caused by the workers was exploited by the extreme Right. This was the best political opportunity presented to the neo-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) since the Liberation. From 1970 on, neo-fascism revived in the electorate, in the state, and especially in the streets.

One of the tactics the Fascists used was to send armed bands of youths to the factory gates during strikes to provoke confrontations. While unionized workers could defend themselves against such attacks, the students alone could not. At times, striking workers would come to their assistance. However, the movements would have to develop their own *servizi d'ordine* to defend themselves—particularly as they were simultaneously attacking the union line. The presence of the Fascists on the streets helped to create a climate of tension that reinforced the trend to organization, and in some cases to militarization, of the extreme Left.

On both left and right, the political parties and their mass organizations were much more alive than the new movements liked to admit. Though less aggressively than either unions or extraparliamentary groups, the parties continued to participate in protest events throughout the period. The years 1970 and 1971, as Figure 9.1 showed, were particularly critical. Just when, according to the theoretical predictions of the extraparliamentary groups, the institutional party system should have collapsed, the parties were responding to challenge by an increased presence in the social movement sector.

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[8] At the PCI's 12th Congress in 1969, Berlinguer, as heir apparent, made an important speech in which he seemed to reject the line that the party had to wage a battle on two fronts—against both the Right and the extreme Left. For an excellent analysis of this congress and its influence on the PCI's strategic adaptation to the movements, see Stephen Hellman (1976: 243–73, and 1977: 160–8).

Movements and Unions

At the same time, trade unions too were becoming a more active presence, though their participation in protest events was dependent on the rhythms of contract renewal negotiations. Using participation in all protest events (and not only in strikes) in the *Corriere* data as our measure of union participation, Figure 9.4 shows that it increased steadily from 1968 on, to a high in the first half of 1972—exactly as the extraparliamentary groups reached their peak of protest activity (compare Figure 9.1).

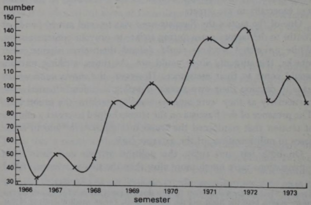

FIG. 9.4 Presence of at least one union in protest events, 1966–73.

The unions were also developing a broad range of non-disruptive activities to attract support in these years. They organized conferences, working groups, and encounters between unions, with the parties, and even with representatives of the students and movement organizations. They made sweeping policy proposals for social and economic reforms that went well beyond contractual issues, and mounted strikes and public demonstrations on behalf of these proposals. They began to organize non-occupational groups such as tenants, pensioners, and the unemployed, in overt competition with the extraparliamentary groups.

As the national confederations increasingly occupied themselves with demands for parliamentary reform, and industrial conflict settled to the plant level, the provincial organizations of the major union movements assumed a more overt public presence, organizing meetings, conferences, encounters with different social actors, and public demonstrations. An analysis of the press releases of the Camera di Lavoro of Lombardy and the CISL provincial union of Milan, for example, reveals an increasing public union presence in these years, just as the extraparliamentary groups were trying to gain support from the workers.[9]

Organizational Competition and Disruption

In other words, the expansion of mass mobilization to many sectors of Italian society, although interpreted by the new movements as evidence of the crisis of Italian capitalism and of their own success, was in fact the result of the interaction among movements, parties, and party mass organizations. The most formative years of the extraparliamentary organizations were also those in which the party system and the unions were regaining their capacity for mobilizing their followers.

Since movements, parties, party mass organizations, and unions were all seeking a mass base from the same population groups, their competition raised the level of disruption. This change was illustrated in Table 7.1, which showed that the level of disruptiveness was directly related to the number and type of organizations present. It was thus not only the flowering of extraparliamentary groups after 1968 that produced continued disruption, but also the competition among these groups, and between them and the parties and unions, for mass support.

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[9] These data will be analysed in Ch. 12.

But there was a forbidding dimension to this disruption: Although the number of groups and organizations in the social movement sector expanded after 1968, the constituency for disruption was declining. Since the movement organizations increasingly concentrated their efforts around the same sectors and in the areas in which conflict was likely to break out, this meant that they frequently competed for the same support base and that their competition led to tactical, as well as ideological radicalization. One result was to increase the level of violence, as we shall see below.

CONCLUSION

The extraparliamentary groups that were created around the industrial conflicts in 1968–9 were deeply marked by their origins. If we wonder at the workerist imagery they carried into the 1970s, we should remember that it was in contact with the militant working class of Turin, Porto Marghera, and Milan that they were forged as national movement organizations. And if some of these groups engaged in increasingly radical acts, it was to outdo one another, the unions, and the party in demonstrating their prowess to the working class.

Some of these groups—such as Lotta Continua, Potere Operaio, and Avanguardia Operaia—actually succeeded in gaining footholds among the workers. Many others—such as the Union of Marxist-Leninists—never could, while others—for example, the Milanese Movimento Studentesco—decided not even to try. Whatever their strategies, after the peak of worker mobilization ended in 1969, none could seriously cut into the unions' growing capacity to control working-class insurgency. It is interesting to note that 1970, the year following the Hot Autumn, produced the greatest percentage increase in union membership since the Liberation (Regini 1980: 64).

The extraparliamentary groups never seriously threatened capitalist hegemony or state power. Their real function for the cycle of protest was to dare to confront both the unions and the party system, on the one hand, and the authorities, on the other, with increasingly provocative forms of collective action. In doing so, they helped to diffuse a culture of protest throughout Italian society and to keep the unions and the left-wing parties attuned to the grievances of their constituencies. Without intending it they spurred reform and the institutionalization of conflict.

In the factory, where the unions were riding the tiger of working-class revolt, it was the extraparliamentary groups, together with the labour and communist Left and a small working class vanguard, that posed extreme demands which were sometimes taken up by the unions, albeit in more restrained form. In the cities, where both unions and parties also took up the cause of slum dwellers, it was these radical groups which led many of the neighbourhood protests that put the needs of the poor on the agenda.

But the extraparliamentary groups also had a less positive function for the cycle of protest. Their militants were increasingly engaged, not only in attempts to help the poor and oppose the parties and unions, but in ferocious ideological and physical conflicts with one another and against the symbols of bourgeois hegemony. Relatively infrequent during the intensive peak of mobilization from 1967 to 1969, intergroup violence became more intense during 1970–1, reaching a peak in the first half of 1972 and 1973. As mass protest retreated from the major sectors of Italian society and institutionalization took hold, the extraparliamentary groups took their ideological conflicts to the street. Struggles between people replaced conflict over interests.

The next two chapters illustrate these trends through the evolution of a particular group on the extreme Left from its beginnings in the cities of the Tuscan coast in 1966 to its fusion with the student movement and its transformation into a national movement organization in 1969, and to a political party from 1973 on. In Chapter 10, we shall first see it as a small workerist group, Potere Operaio Toscano, transforming itself into a student-based movement organization through the cycle of university protest in Pisa. We shall then see how the decline of the university movement created problems for the group that it could only confront by organization.

In Chapter 11, we shall see how the encounter with the militant working class of Turin transformed the leading faction of this group into the core of a national extraparliamentary group, Lotta Continua. We shall then show how its attempts to attract the workers and expand its base beyond them during a period of declining mobilization led first to the diffusion of protest, then to the temptations of violence, and finally to its transformation into a political party.

10

FROM ORGANIZATION TO MOVEMENT: THE CASE OF POTERE OPERAIO TOSCANO

The power of a wave of protest comes from its mass base: from an increase in social and political conflict, from the development of new social actors and their demands, and from the expansion of opportunities for expression. But, as we saw in Chapter 9, the diffusion and direction of protest are neither spontaneous nor automatic: they are conditioned by organization, both new ones which arise out of the mass movement and older ones that look within it to expand their influence. During this phase of the movement, spontaneous action and decentralized structures are logical *forms* of organization for a movement to adopt.

In this chapter, we shall investigate how movement organizations interact with a growing wave of mass protest to give it shape and direction. They do so, not by imposing consciousness on spontaneity, in the much-abused Leninist formula, but by adopting strategies of movement politics. They alter their ideological appeals, attempt to diffuse protest to new sectors, and try to expand their support by radicalizing their appeals and intensifying their repertoires of action. In the rising phase of the cycle, organizations come to *resemble* movements.

But the merger between movement and organization is never more than partial and temporary. For the intensification of disruption to gain mass support exposes the movement organizations to demands from supporters to attack authorities more directly; to competition from other groups for space in the social movement sector; to hostility from opponents and repression from the state. These pressures require greater coordination, more control over militants, and an increase in organization, as we shall see in the case of an archetypical movement organization called Potere Operaio Toscano.

I A VANGUARD OUTSIDE THE MASSES

The Versilia is a narrow strip of industrialized Tuscan coastline running south from La Spezia towards Viareggio and Pisa. Massa and Carrara are its two oldest industrial centres. They grew up around the quarries where Michelangelo once hacked marble from the Apuan Alps that shimmer behind the coastal plain. For centuries, the quarries were the industrial base of the Versilia, but in recent decades other industries—Dalmine, Marzotto, Olivetti, Piaggio, St Gobain—built factories on or near the coast. Postwar prosperity also turned the Versilia into a resort strip, the miles of cabanas and lockers testifying to Italians' passion for the sun.

In the nineteenth century, a militantly radical working-class movement grew up among the *cavatori* of the marble quarries. The Versilia's radicalism was shaped by their work and grievances and assumed a variety of forms—anarchism, syndicalism, socialism. But after World War II, as new industries crowded the coast, it was the Communists who came out on top, and gained control of the working-class vote, although they never quite extirpated its anarchical streak.

No social contrast in Italy was more glaring than that between the Versilia's old proletarian tradition and the new consumer society displayed along the strip of land between the coastline and the mountains. But social contradictions, however glaring, do not explode into social protest without a catalyst. This emerged on the Versilia coast in the mid-1960s through the introduction of a third element—radical students from the nearby University of Pisa.

We saw in Part Two that new groups of leftists, radically anti-communist and attracted to 'workerist' models, had appeared in Italy well before 1968. Like all insurgent movements, they worked in part within, but increasingly against, the traditional parties, unions and mass associations. Potere Operaio of Tuscany was such a group. It was founded by former university students, many of whom had been Communist, who sought a social base among the working class of the Versilia.[1]

Potere Operaio of Tuscany developed at the same time as the Potere Operaio that was active in the Porto Marghera strike described in Chapter 7. There were loose personal links between these two groups and others with similar aims around the country, but they never formed a unified movement. The adoption of the label 'workers' power' in a variety of places at the same time reflected both foreign influences (this was the period of 'black power' in the United States) and a domestic radical tradition that saw in the industrial working class the necessary wellspring of revolutionary activity (Magna 1978).

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[1] Much of the information that follows comes from the personal archive of and conversations with Adriano Sofri, to whom I wish to express my sincere thanks. Additional materials were found in the Potere Operaio Toscano file of the Organizzazione dei Lavoratori Comunisti archive currently at the Gramsci Institute of Rome.

Potere Operaio of Tuscany established its first base in Massa, where, from 1967 on, it began to publish a newspaper by the same name. But it eventually extended its presence south to Lucca, Viareggio, and Piombino (Luperini 1969), and of course to Pisa, for it had been founded by a small group of students who met at the University of Pisa in the early 1960s. By the time its newspaper began to appear in February 1967, the group was, according to Romano Luperini, a collective of political work that had as its motor force a group of comrades engaged in factory work in Massa and a group of students and intellectuals in Pisa, some of whom had been part of the communist university cell (1969: 106).

Potere Operaio of Tuscany, like other new Marxist groups of the period, had a symbiotic relationship with the traditional Left. In fact, though it launched an anti-PCI and anti-union polemic from the start, Potere Operaio included a number of militants who were active in the PSIUP or the PCI (Luperini 1969: 107). By the middle of 1967, while admitting that 'comrades of the PSIUP, the PCI and other political formations participate in its work,' its leaders felt it necessary to deny that it was 'an instrument of the PSIUP' (*Il Potere Operaio*, 7 June 1967).

The founder of the group, Adriano Sofri, had first come to the PCI's attention in 1964, when he was a student at the Scuola Normale. There he participated briefly in the PCI-dominated students' association, the UGI. When party secretary Togliatti came to the Normale to lecture, Sofri heckled him to the point of anger. 'You go and make the revolution', exploded the usually laconic Togliatti. 'I will,' hurled back the young Sofri.[2]

It was at a lecture in Pisa that Sofri also met the dissident Socialist Raniero Panzieri, founder and guiding spirit of the *Quaderni Rossi* group, and began to attend the group's meetings occasionally in Turin.[3] For a short time thereafter, fiercely anti-union handbills appeared in Massa bearing the imprimatur of 'Quaderni Rossi of Tuscany', an organization that seems to have existed more on paper than in reality.[4]

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[2] Sofri, who admits that, at the time, he had little idea of a revolution, was obviously delighted that his political notoriety began with a challenge to the PCI's national leader (personal interview, 19 Mar. 1987).

[3] Sofri interview, Florence, 19 Mar. 1987. He describes the encounter with Panzieri as one of his most formative experiences.

Sofri left the Normale to teach high school in Massa, where he launched a number of amateur political initiatives. He was briefly elected secretary of a near-defunct Communist cell when he came into contact with some Olivetti workers in Massa, but when party leaders learned of his identity and unorthodox views, they locked up the section.[5] Ever resourceful, Sofri found a new political base in a club called the 'Circolo Gobetti', using it to organize meetings and direct handbills at the workers.

Like other groups in the archipelago of the new Left, Potere Operaio quickly learned the importance of the printed word. The first handbills appeared under its label during the contract negotiations of 1966. They had a pungency that the workers were unaccustomed to finding in the tedious manifestos of the unions. 'You have to admit that the capitalist bosses are terrific in taking care of their own interests,' wrote Sofri in an early handbill, 'that is, in screwing the working class more all the time'.

Potere Operaio also learned that working-class alienation wore a human face. In 1966 when an Olivetti worker committed suicide, Sofri interpreted the death, not as a personal tragedy, but as the result of the infernal pace of the assembly line.[6] While other extreme Left organizers were drearily enunciating an abstract economism, Sofri had grasped that the 'subjective' side of the workers' lives might be more important to them than the objective contradictions of the capitalist system.

Potere Operaio also appealed to the workers with what was then an original proposal: equal wage increases for all workers should replace the traditional percentage increases or productivity premiums that benefited skilled workers more than others. Percentage increases 'divide the working class internally, divide manual from technical workers', and serve only the bosses.[7] The call for egalitarian wage increases eventually became a central part of the extraparliamentary and union Left's campaign to attract unskilled workers.

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[4] For example, a handbill from the Sofri archive dated 3 Mar. 1966 is addressed 'To the metalworking workers'. It condemned all three unions for the accord they had signed with management. When the newspaper *Il Potere Operaio* first appeared in Feb. 1967, there was a quotation from Panzieri on the masthead (*Il Potere Operaio*, 20 Feb. 1967).

[5] Sofri interview, 19 Mar. 1987.

[6] 'No one had ever tried to mobilize people around something as personal as a suicide before', he recalled years later (interview, 19 Mar. 1987).

[7] Circolo P. Gobetti, 'I metalmeccanici di Massa: L'esempio dell'Olivetti'. Mimeographed handbill dated 29 Jan. 1966, from Sofri archive.

Potere Operaio's policy line was remarkably prescient. Even in 1967, it touched on many of the future themes of the future workers' movement. It argued 'against piecework, for the self-limitation of production, for equal salary increases, for the refusal to accept the workers' division into categories and class collaboration, for the direct organization of the workers at the point of production' (Luperini 1969: 106).

But Potere Operaio shared the dilemma of other new Left groups: to appeal to the workers, it had to depend on the rhythms of union-led contract negotiations and on issues placed on the political agenda by the 'old' Left. From its founding, the group's newspaper was dependent on national contract negotiations for the issues it raised. *Il Potere Operaio* tried to influence outcomes in factory disputes such as those of the Nuovo Pignone and the RIV in early 1967; Olivetti and Solvey in the spring of that year; Dalmine, Marzotto, and Italsider in the autumn; and, early in 1968, at St Gobain.

These industrial disputes, which were led by the unions, were used as occasions for the new Left groups to expose their 'betrayal' of the workers. But when the contract negotiations were settled and the workers' attention returned to the assembly line, the new Left groups were deprived of their platforms. Since most negotiation took place at the national and sectoral levels, the new Left groups even lacked the opportunity to intervene at the local level, where their only strength might lie.

It was no accident, therefore, that at this stage *Il Potere Operaio* reduced its coverage of factory conflicts (Luperini 1969: 108) and began to focus on other issues. Like every other left-wing group around the country, it participated aggressively in the anti-Vietnam war campaign in 1967 (*Il Potere Operaio*, 7 June 1967). But unlike the orthodox Maoist groups, like the one we saw in Livorno in Chapter 2, it did not limit itself to safe left-wing themes like Vietnam; it adopted a 'possibilistic' attitude towards 'all the various situations of struggle that political events place before it from time to time' (Luperini 1969: 108).

In the mid-to-late 1960s, as with many of the small revolutionary groups, Potere Operaio's leaders were deeply impressed by China and Cuba. Its leaders even developed an aggressive theoretical orientation that was described by one critic as 'Guevarist-Maoist' (Luperini 1969: 108). But Maoism for most of these groups was more of an outflanking manoeuvre against the traditional Left (the PCI at the time was China's stalking horse for the Soviet Union) than the expression of a profound theoretical conviction. The group was not so much Maoist as 'movementist', for its leaders were less concerned with the the fine points of its theoretical line than with exploiting opportunities for participation in the conflicts that were developing in Italian society.

Action, and particularly confrontational mass action, was the school in which a revolutionary consciousness would be developed among the masses. At the end of 1967, *Il Potere Operaio* theorized that 'the [revolutionary] party will be born in struggle, it will be born and grow in the masses through the collective political maturation of those who operate in practice in a revolutionary manner' (20 Dec. 1967). As Luperini observed, 'From time to time, we have the impression that conflict with the police is seen as almost the only means to cultivate the political conscience of the masses' (1969: 109).

It was well before the same idea appeared among French students that the slogan *'lotta continua'* (continuous struggle) was coined. 'The revolutionary struggle,' wrote Sofri, will be advanced only through the 'immediate objective of a continuous struggle against social peace, against every attempt of the bosses and the bureaucrats to brake the struggle' (Luperini 1969: 109). Potere Operaio was an organization trying to stimulate a movement.

But where would Potere Operaio's leaders find an object for its movementist strategy and a site for the continuous struggle it wished to wage? In the industrial sector, the group was dependent on the rhythms of contract negotiation set by the unions. After the disappointments of the 1966 contract negotiations, the workers appeared to have relapsed into a state of disillusionment. But as the agitation against university reform began to heat up in 1966 and 1967, Potere Operaio found an outlet for its energies amongst the students, particularly at the embattled University of Pisa.

II GO TO THE MASSES!

Pisa is a provincial capital along the Tuscan littoral, with a few small industries, an electorate balanced between Left and Centre, and a local *giunta* that was controlled by the parties of the national Centre-Left coalition. In 1965, the PCI, looking desperately for an escape from isolation, engaged in a symbolic 'occupation' of the city hall to publicize its opponents' scramble for positions following the local elections.[8]

Pisa's pride was its university, which had 15,000 students and the elite institution of Italian higher education, the Scuola Normale Superiore, at its core. In the mid-1960s, the electoral instability in national and local politics was reflected in Pisa's student movement. Although the Communist-Socialist UGI had been dominant in the past, the Catholic Intesa group was strong too, and two more moderate groups had made substantial gains in the student elections of 1965.

The fragmentation of Pisan student politics was also a reflection of national political realignments. With the coming of the Centre-Left and the breakaway of PSIUP from the Socialist party, UGI became faction-ridden, and a 'Chinese' tendency found space to develop within it. The UGI lost heavily in the student elections of 1965, to the dismay of the PCI. UGI's losses earned it a rebuke in the local Communist paper, *Il Lavoratore*, which charged that it had engaged in 'empty ideologizing' (read: indulged in debates about the 'correctness' of the PCI line). The paper haughtily demanded that the association correct its errors rapidly and with determination (12 Dec. 1965).[9] The debate revealed how national political realignments and disputes among national left-wing elites were creating political opportunities for challengers within the traditional student organizations.

The new mood of militance among Pisan students also swept up non-political groups and reviews. One example: the journal *Nuovo Impegno*. When it was founded in 1965, it carried the subtitle 'Bi-monthly Review of Literature', but by 1967 it had dropped the term 'Literature' from its masthead and was carrying out a survey of minority groups on the left (nos. 4–5, 6–7). By August 1969 the editors were writing; '*Nuovo Impegno* has become a political review, in line with the growing political engagement of the collective of comrades who edit it.' The editorial staff had not changed: the way they saw themselves, and the role of their journal, had been influenced by the wave of mobilization.

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[8] This episode, and the conflict between Pisan Social Democrats and Christian Democrats which led up to it, is described in *Unità Proletaria*, the newspaper of the PSIUP, in its Apr. 1965 issue.

[9] The debate over UGI's losses in the student elections led to a series of letters to the PCI newspaper, either defending the association's freedom of action or demanding that it follow the party line (*Il Lavoratore*, 5 Jan. 1966).

The anti-Vietnam movement gave the radicals in the UGI a public forum for a searing critique of the official Left. A handbill put out by the Pisan UGI in March 1967 illustrates how both their forms of action and their language were designed to embarrass the PCI and establish their credibility. After criticizing a peaceful PCI anti-Vietnam War protest that was organized around 'generic solidarity with the people of Vietnam', the radicals claimed that, when they tried to give it a more aggressive direction, the representatives of the official Left

> propose[d] to carry forward their battle by petitions, by collecting signatures. . . and by marching silently through peripheral and unknown streets along the walls of the cemeteries and by similar pious manifestations that save the conscience of the petite bourgeoisie and leave nothing changed.[10]

This document is instructive in several ways. First, it comes from *within* a mass organization of the official Left, and not from an extraparliamentary group. Second, it expands the traditional interpretative frame of left-wing foreign policy protest from 'the expression of generic solidarity with the people of Vietnam' into a broader context: support of 'a general struggle of oppressed peoples against imperialism and capitalist exploitation'. Finally, it uses a conventional form of action organized by the Left as an opportunity for launching new and more aggressive forms of action.

It was the national debate over educational reform that created the richest opportunities for movement organizations to challenge the parties and associations of the old Left and to gain new supporters. Pisan students first participated in the national strike against the government's reform plan in November 1964. Then, in 1965, the UGI's radical wing joined a coalition of radical groups in two occupations of the Sapienza, the university's administrative headquarters.

The occupations pointed up the differing mentality between the old and new Left about the relationship between actions and goals. For the pragmatic PCI mainstream, the occupation was a useful means to put student pressure on Parliament on behalf of the party's policies; but for the new student Left, it was a means to establish space for themselves within the University, outflank the moderates, and disrupt the system.[11] In such a conflict, UGI radicals had more in common with new Left groups like Potere Operaio Toscano than with their own party comrades (*Il Mulino*, Jan.–June 1967: 370).

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[10] From a document in the *Potere Operaio Toscano* dossier in the OLC Archive in the Gramsci Institute of Rome.

The disarray in the Pisan student organizations drew formerly unpoliticized students into the social movement sector. But this expansion of participation did not signify the spontaneous generation of a new movement against the bureaucratic 'organizations' of the old party system.[12] On the contrary: the first moves came within the student organizations themselves, giving organized groups like Potere Operaio Toscano an opportunity to gain support from within the old Left. In February 1967, this expansion of political opportunities culminated in an event of national importance—a new occupation of the Sapienza and the publication of what came to be known as the 'Pisan Theses'.

III THE VANGUARD INSIDE THE MASSES

By early 1967, the university Left around the country was engaged in a series of occupations inspired by local issues and by opposition to the government's plan for university reform. In places as far apart and as different as Pisa, Cagliari, Florence, Bologna, Rome, Turin, and Camerino, student groups to the left of the PCI, using bold and innovative tactics and issuing flamboyant programmatic documents, succeeded in occupying university faculties (Carpi and Luperini 1966: 66). In February, to publicize their opposition to the government's reform project, a coalition of these groups called a meeting of student representatives from all the currently-occupied faculties in Bologna. Arriving in Bologna, they learned that a national group of university rectors was planning to meet in Pisa to discuss the Gui plan. They immediately voted to move their own meeting to Pisa, where for some days the faculties of Physics, Chemistry, Letters, and Philosophy had been occupied by Pisan students (Carpi and Luperini 1966: 67).

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[11] One of the UGI's PCI 'friends' wrote pedantically in the local party newspaper: 'The occupation—the typical tactic of university struggle—is in itself a valid tool, but it is useful only as a step in raising the consciousness of the students,. and should not be the only instrument used in struggling to reform the university' (*Il Lavoratore*, 5 Jan. 1966).

[12] 'The history of the student movement from 1963 to the present [1967] is the history of the encounter between the difficulties and the needs of the student masses . . . and the traditional associations and representative organs' (Pero 1967: 55).

The February 1967 occupation of the Sapienza was not a spontaneous local eruption against an autocratic university administration, but a calculated political move on the part of a national coalition of student organizers who were attempting to attract the attention of the media to their opposition to the Gui plan. What unified them was both the desire to participate in the national policy debate and their antagonism to the tepid reformism of the traditional student associations and parties.

The opposition of the Sapienza group to the traditional student organizations first took the form of an attack on their lack of internal democracy. UGI, Intesa, and the others were condemned as 'completely devoid of a real democratic control from the base' (Carpi and Luperini 1966: 66). The occupiers proposed an alternative form of decision making: students should be represented by autonomous 'democratic representatives of a union type, directly elected by assemblies of the faculty' (Carpi and Luperini 1966: 66) and controlled democratically from the base. What would eventually become a general theory of autonomy and decentralized democracy (and what wore the face of Utopia) originated in the efforts of experienced student organizers to undercut the party-run mass organizations.

The idea of the occupation as an autonomous and democratic policy-making body had already appeared in the universities of Turin and Trento (described in Chapter 6). The concept of building a single national union in place of the competing party-linked student associations was born, not in the movement, but in the left wing of the UGI. What really captured the imagination of the students in the Sapienza occupation was the framing of these two ideas within a new, more radical interpretative frame—the concept of the student as worker.

This idea had first been elaborated, in simpler form, in Trento in 1966. But while the Trentini went no further than conceiving of the university as a mechanism of production, the Sapienza occupiers carried the metaphor of the university as factory to its logical conclusion, defining the students 'as a labour force in the process of training and as subordinate social figures' (Grazioli 1979: 9), and demanding that they be *paid* for their productive labour. The Sapienza occupiers concluded; 'the student will take on the value of a salaried producer of surplus value only to the extent that a university salary is introduced and generalized' (Grazioli 1979: 11).

It was in the intense atmosphere of the continuing assembly in the occupied Sapienza that the crucial debates took place that led to the document that would later be known as the 'Pisan Theses'.[13] Under the banner of Utopia, a practical three-pronged political strategy took shape: to draw national attention to the Sapienza and against the reform law by occupying the site of the rectors' national meeeting; to excoriate the traditional student associations for their dependency on the political parties; and to appeal to the students' concrete interests by proposing that they be paid a salary.

The political advantages of the Sabienza occupation became clear as the traditional student associations began to take positions on it. Their first response was to condemn it as a 'violent action of minorities' and to call a legal counter-protest. But their efforts backfired; though called by Intesa and the moderates, the counter-protest was immediately taken over by Fascists, who tried to break down the door of the Sapienza in the presence of an impressive body of police (Carpi and Luperini 1966: 67). This embarrassing outcome split the student associations, as the Liberals and Social Democrats called for police action, UGI supported the occupation, and Intesa attempted to mediate between rector and occupiers. It redounded to the benefit of the radicals, for where there were fascists, there had to be an anti-fascist front.

The disruptive effect of the occupation deepened when, on 11 February, the police, for the first time in postwar history on the orders of a University rector, invaded the Sapienza to clear out the occupiers (Carpi and Luperini 1966: 69). This unexpected escalation of the level of conflict led other Pisan students, teaching assistants, and even some professors to join the rousted Sapienza occupiers. Fortified by these reinforcements, they organized a public meeting in front of the Scuola Normale, blocking traffic, and getting themselves on national television (Carpi and Luperini 1967: 69). This expanded group then retired to the Faculty of Letters to finish writing the Theses. The presence of a majority of Pisans within the enlarged Sapienza group ensured that the ideas of Potere Operaio Toscano would be prominent in the final form of the Theses.[14]

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[13] The Theses were first published in *Il Mulino* (1967). A later version appeared in Cazzaniga (1967), Movimento Studentesco (1968), and Marsilio (1968).

[14] We have no evidence of how many of the participants in the second phase of the occupation were Pisans and how many came from other occupied universities. The major published sources (Carpi and Luperini 1967; Cazzaniga 1967) were written by Pisans.

True to form, the rector ignored the divisions among the student organizations and, using the reigning Fascist-era legislation, suspended the Pisan students for an indefinite period, warning that any interruption of university business would be taken very seriously (Carpi and Luperini 1966: 70). The somewhat obscure issue of the Theses now receded into the background as the Sapienza group responded with outrage at the rector's invocation of a fascist law. Showing far more political savvy than their adult opponents, the movement's leaders quickly called for a common front with Catholics and Socialists, and a number of faculties were re-occupied on the new issue of the right to expression (Carpi and Luperini 1966: 69).

Sympathy for the occupiers, enhanced by the rector's move, destroyed what was left of the traditional student organizations' popularity. On 17 March, they tried to call a legal demonstration in Piazza del Duomo. From there they intended to lead their followers to the rectorate to protest against the suspensions. They were at first delighted to find themselves joined by a large number of former occupiers. The account of Carpi and Luperini makes it clear that the intentions of the ex-occupiers were rather different: 'At the moment when the procession moves off towards the rectorate . . . the students who have participated in the occupation lead it towards the centre of the city, abandoning the Catholic and Socialist leaders and blocking traffic, with the idea of making clear to public opinion the movement's deep commitment to struggle' (1967: 71).

Was it a 'spontaneous' inspiration that led these former occupiers to join a demonstration sponsored by the moderates, only to break away from it with the bulk of its participants and march downtown to block traffic? Not really. After ending their march and eluding the police, the 'ex-occupiers' and their new followers regrouped in Piazza Garibaldi, where they voted to return to the Sapienza. When the rector closed the building before they could get inside, they were surrounded by a tight cordon of police and 'showed their maturity by refusing to be provoked into a violent encounter' (Carpi and Luperini 1966: 71). The whole episode reveals a sense of political timing, a cool exploitation of opportunities, and a choice of targets and tactics that could not have been the fruit of spontaneity.

The episode of 17 March destroyed the credibility of the old student associations—that is, it had precisely the effect its organizers intended. The Liberal and Social Democratic students had been forced into positions that made them appear as accomplices to reaction, while the Catholic Intesa group disintegrated. UGI, many of whose members had by now defected to the insurgents, was so torn by dissension that it lost its role as spokesman for the official Left, a role that was now assumed by the Communist Youth Federation. The latter's accusation that the occupiers had 'broken the unity of the student movement' (Carpi and Luperini 1966: 73) was no less than a description of their success.

As for the left-wing parties, while PSIUP supported the occupation, the PCI issued a nationally publicized rebuke (*L'Unità*, 12 Feb. 1967). When the Pisan Theses appeared proclaiming their rejection of parliamentary reformism and demanding the merger of the traditional student associations into a national union, *L'Unità* (12 Feb.) commented that such a document 'cannot represent a positive phase in the construction of an increasingly strong student movement. . . . The [old] representative institutions, it is true, reveal grave deficiencies. But to go from here to a destructive judgement, proposing basically to begin from zero, is a big jump.'

It *was* a big jump, but it was scarcely an attempt to 'begin from zero'. On the one hand, the issues and methods of the occupiers had their roots in the traditional subculture of the Left. University reform had been on the agenda for years—the Left had helped to put it there—and the occupiers' 'utopianism' was nothing more than the extension of the traditional interpretative frame of workerism to new sites and different circumstances. On the other hand, the occupations allowed radical movement organizations to exploit new political opportunities. These organizations used the divisive issue of university reform to gain a following and defeat their opponents, turning the occupation from a mere disruption into a tool for creating support for themselves in the university. They had one more advantage: the political sense, the organizational skills, and the tactical creativity provided by Potere Operaio Toscano.

IV FROM INSURGENCY TO ORGANIZATION

From mid-1967 until the end of 1968, Potere Operaio consolidated its support in the university and expanded its base to high schools throughout Tuscany. Fortified by its movementist ideology, its main recruiting tactic was a whirlwind series of weekend conferences in different cities, which allowed the leaders to generate enthusiasm, gain publicity, and identify new militants.[15] The group had only a skeletal organization built around aggressive protests, informally organized and diffused by word-of-mouth. In a climate of increasing mobilization, no more was necessary to gain a local following and a national reputation. With the partial exception of Florence, Potere Operaio became the hegemonic force among high school students in this traditionally left-wing region (Luperini 1969: 111).

What were the reasons for Potere Operaio Toscano's success? It is not enough to conclude that it succeeded because it was on the scene when the students began to mobilize against the educational reform and the Vietnam War. Other groups were there as well, but not all of them captured the students' support. Potere Operaio possessed three important resources:

First, as the snatches of doctrine cited above suggest, the leaders had grasped early the importance of disruption in building a movement. Potere Operio Toscano excelled in deploying people aggressively and imaginatively against unpopular or unusual targets and in using confrontations as occasions for recruiting new supporters.

Second, though profoundly marked by the traditional workerism of the extreme Left, Potere Operaio's interpretation of this tenet was more inclusive than that of its competitors. Its leaders tried to be present wherever in the region social conflict was real or potential, finding in the most diverse social groups and situations evidence of capitalist exploitation and opportunities for mobilization. Workerism came to *mean* seeking opportunities for mobilization wherever there was conflict that could be linked to exploitation.

Finally, from the production of its first amateurish handbills in 1966, Potere Operaio's leaders understood the importance of the media. They found intellectual outlets in the new journals *Giovane Critica* and *Nuovo Impegno*, and managed to have articles about their activities and debates appear in the Italian edition of the *Monthly Review*. Their aggressively confrontational actions themselves attracted media attention; indeed, they were calculated to do so.[16]

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[15] Sofri remembers the period as one of 'nomadism'. Every weekend the group would travel to meet with local sympathizers in a different city. Though the practice created no formal organization, it did create a network of personal contacts that would serve as a recruitment network later on. Particularly important were the ties developed with militants of the student movement of Trento, Turin, and Pavia. (Sofri interview, 19 Mar. 1987.)

[16] Articles attributable to Potere Operaio militants' efforts to publicize the group can be found in *Nuovo Impegno* (1967, 1968), *Monthly Review* (1968), Petroni (1968), *Potere Operaio Toscano* (1968*a* and *b*, 1969*a* and *b*). See also Sofri (1968, 1969, 1977) and Cazzaniga (1967).

Disruption, expanded workerism, and expressive protests came together in a series of actions led by the group from May to December 1968. An examination of these actions demonstrate how the movement carried the lessons it had learned from the university to a high school student base and applied them to new targets and opportunities. But it also shows how the decline of the wave of university protests left the group vulnerable, exposed to retaliation, and in need of greater organization.

Minding Other People's Business

As the police increasingly began to roust the students from their home institutions, sometimes with violence, the minority groups on the left were forced to operate on increasingly more hostile terrain. Like all political actors, the leaders applied what they knew to these new situations: in the case of Potere Operaio Toscano, these included a broadened workerist rhetoric, confrontational practice, and a dash of imagination. While these elements could gain media attention, attract new members, and maintain solidarity, they would put the movement at risk when it moved outside its home ground and looked around for new opportunities.

By early 1968, Potere Operaio's young activists were participating not only in conflicts outside the Marzotto and St Gobain factories in Pisa, but trying to support sanitation workers on strike, and to mix with paratroopers in training in the region![17] As they began to confront authorities and elites outside the universities with aggressive tactics, the police were more likely to be provoked and to retaliate.[18] Things came to a head in May when, after a series of occupations at the University had been cleared out (Petroni 1968), Potere Operaio decided to occupy the Pisa railway station and block the line. The police turned out in force, heads were cracked, national attention returned to Pisa, and a number of arrests resulted.

Campaigns such as this proved the energy and imagination of the leadership, but they also show the dilemmas of the movement that emerged from the university protests of 1967–8. In the atmosphere of mobilization in 1968, it was tempting to believe that the students' natural allies would welcome their support and cheer on their attempts to block the system. But sanitation workers and parachutists were unlikely to feel much common cause with radical students, and commuters dependent on the railway were outraged by the occupation of the station.

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[17] From handbills in the personal archive of Adriano Sofri: 'La lotta della Marzotto continua' (undated); 'Unifichiamo le lotte di tutti i lavoratori' (9 Sept. 1968); 'Studenti e paracadutisti' (27 Sept. 1968).

[18] A handbill entitled 'Studenti' reads: 'Saturday, the police charged the parade of students from the secondary schools and the university who were demonstrating against the violence used by the police against the university students who occupied their faculties. . . . Let's oppose our action to their force: everybody on strike!' The handbill, which is signed 'Students in Struggle' and is dated 21 Jan. 1968, comes from the personal archive of Adriano Sofri.

Moreover, once they left the University, leaders were throwing their supporters unprotected into an atmosphere that was less protected and in which they faced both competitors and the forces of order without the mediation of university officials or allies in the faculty. The risks and costs of such confrontations became clear to the entire movement on New Year's Eve, 1968.[19]

La Bussola

21 December 1968. A national strike has been called by the unions that represent department store employees; the motivating issues are their low wages and miserable working conditions. As it has been called during the busiest shopping season of the year, the unions reason that big chains such as UPIM and Standa will find it hard to resist the relatively modest demands that the underpaid clerks—mostly young girls and women—are making (*Nuovo Impegno* 1968: 21).

The unions may or may not have counted on the unsolicited help of the student movement. But, throughout the country, students offer their support anyway, for example in the protest in front of Milan's Rinascente store described in Chapter 5. In Pisa, the union-led agitation attracts the support of students influenced by Potere Operaio Toscano.

The department store strike comes at an opportune time for Potere Operaio's leaders. Though repeated occupations of the University, clashes with the police, and the May occupation of the Pisa railway station have led to confrontation, arrests, and media attention, they have not led to much else. A region-wide occupation of high schools that began in late autumn now shows signs of demoralization and dissension.[20] The group's leaders have called a region-wide conference for early January to study these problems. But, in the meantime, supporting an ongoing labour dispute will provide them with an opportunity to fight on the side of the workers and demonstrate that the group is still alive.

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[19] The narrative that follows is based partly on the following published sources: *Nuovo Impegno* (1968), *Potere Operaio Toscano* (1969*a*), Sofri (1969); partly on unpublished documents in the Potere Operaio dossier of the Organizzazione dei Lavoratori Comunisti archive; and partly on Sofri's recollections of the incident.

Just before Christmas, Potere Operaio leads a student demonstration outside the UPIM department store in Pisa. It gains some acceptance by the store workers and their union representatives. But Potere Operaio tries to frame the conflict more broadly: 'The bourgeois system exploits and dominates men. . . in every moment of their lives', it argues, 'and not just in the place of work' (*Nuovo Impegno* 1968: 21). The most important outcome of the UPIM strike is that the students supporting Potere Operaio urge the group to show its opposition to the conspicuous consumption in Italian society that reaches its pinnacle during Christmas week by demonstrating against the vulgar display of New Years' Eve celebrations.[21]

Like the postwar economic boom itself, the stretch of cabanas, bars, and nightclubs along the Tuscan coast north of Pisa was never planned: it just grew up, blocking the sea view from the coast road with a gaudy barrier of glass, concrete, and imported palm trees that extends unbroken from Viareggio to Massa. The strip has become so well-known that a lavish New Year's Eve show is often televised from the most extravagant of the beach palaces, the Bussola, in a little place called Marina di Pietrasanta. On New Year's Eve 1968, the singer Shirley Bassey is scheduled to appear there. This nightclub is the ostentatious symbol of conspicuous consumption that the students and Potere Operaio choose as their target.

During the week following the department store agitations, word of the plan to demonstrate outside the Bussola travels up and down the coast (*Nuovo Impegno* 1968: 22). From handbills distributed in Pisa, Massa-Carrara, La Spezia, and Lucca, students and workers sympathetic to a variety of groups—not only Potere Operaio—learn of the demonstration and find out how to get to Marina di Pietrasanta. The authorities hear of the demonstration too, and lay on a small force of *carabinieri* and police to protect the holiday merrymakers (*Corriere*, 2 Jan. 1969: 1).

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[20] A handbill signed 'Movimento studentesco medio pisano' contains the admission, 'The recent struggles [in the high schools], despite their great potential and the impressive degree of general mobilization shown, have brought to light . . . weaknesses regarding the capacity of organization at the base.'

[21] In recalling the campaign 19 years later, Sofri emphasized strongly that the proposal to demonstrate outside the Bussola came, not from his organization, but from students supporting the strike in front of UPIM (interview, 19 Mar. 1987).

By nine p.m. on 31 December, a few hundred youths have surrounded the Bussola (*Nuovo Impegno* 1968: 22).[22] By ten, the first New Year's celebrators, dressed in furs and black ties, begin to arrive. The initial encounters are mostly verbal, and the police, following what appears to be general policy, hang back. As people sweep into the nightclub, the protesters begin to shout: 'The children of Biafra wish you a Happy New Year!', punctuating their cries with what would later be called 'a symbolic shower of tomatoes' (Potere Operaio 1969*a*: 42).

According to the police, the first physical contact occurs at 10.30, when a photographer gets roughed up for taking pictures of the demonstrators as they taunt people trying to enter the Bussola. When the carabinieri who rescue him are manhandled, as the official sources claim, the police organize a charge against the demonstrators, who respond with a fusillade of stones, rotten fruit, and—so the police maintain—balls of clay laced with glass fragments (*Corriere*, 2 Jan. 1969). Police reinforcements arrive, a second charge is organized, and the demonstrators retreat to the coast road, where they build barricades and regroup.

Who fired the shot that paralyses young Soriano Ceccanti is never discovered despite months of investigation. What is certain is that the police, once they sense the confrontational attitude of the Bussola protesters, take out their guns and fire. (They later claim that they fired into the air, but the demonstrators violently disagree, and the walls opposite the nightclub are laced with bullet holes.) Whatever the truth, one certain fact is that Ceccanti has a bullet lodged in his spine. His friends pick him up, stop a passing motorist, and drive with him down the coast road to Pisa. In the confusion and darkness, as the police begin to round up whoever they can catch and cram them into their 'panthers', few people know that a boy has been shot.

For weeks, Ceccanti lies paralysed in the hospital while the conservative press circulates stories of strange men in evening dress with ammunition in the boots of their cars, of guns miraculously discovered on the ground two days later, and of putative plots to subvert the Republic.[23] The arrested students are put on trial in March and a number are convicted. The Bussola protest receives an enormous amount of national publicity. For example, in *Corriere della Sera* over the next five months, there appear forty-seven different articles on the demonstration, the shooting, and the trial.

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[22] Sofri, in his *Monthly Review* article (1969) says 300 people participated, while the *Corriere* used the figure of 500. In this case, the conservative press may not have been overstating the level of participation, for members of groups other than Sofri's also joined the demonstration.

The Political Reaction

How can we explain the notoriety of the events at Marina di Pietrasanta? There are at least four main reasons.

First, the incident followed two others at Avola and Battipaglia in which the police had fired on demonstrators. Both of these incidents raised a call from the Left for disarming the police which stimulated an investigation by the government. The left-wing parties were bound to seize on yet another instance of police repression if only to further their own political advantage against the government.

Second, the demonstration struck, not at schoolteachers or factory owners, but at ordinary members of the public who were enjoying nothing more than a night out. Potere Operaio and its supporters thought of themselves as striking a blow against a bourgeoisie sated with profits made from the sweat of honest workers; in reality, they struck the nerve endings of a new middle class that had worked hard and was hungry to enjoy its fruits.

The bourgeois press had its own reasons for publicizing the events. The physical confrontation at the Bussola had given someone—police, provocateurs, or third parties—an opportunity for violence: and violence, whoever is responsible for it, sells newspapers. Moreover, some parts of the press, like *La Nazione* of Florence, were beating the drum for the repression of dissent. Particularly aggressive was a right-wing Catholic paper in Rome, *La Luna*, which called for 'self-defence squads' to protect the public against aggression (Potere Operaio 1969*a*).

Finally, this campaign for repression did not originate with the press; it was being orchestrated competitively by the DC and by the Right, and illustrates how social protest interacts with ordinary politics. The 1968 elections had shown that the DC's strategy of accommodation with the Socialists was not popular; it had not stopped the PCI's electoral advance, and it presented the Right with its first opportunity since the war to gain legitimacy.[24] The DC would have to employ more aggressive tactics if it was to hold on to its slipping hegemony.

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[23] For the facts as much of the bourgeois press interpreted them, see *Corriere della Sera*, 2–10 Jan. 1969. The Minister of the Interior had to make a formal statement before Parliament on 14 Jan. (reported in the *Corriere* on 15 Jan.). The 42 arrested demonstrators were tried in March and April, with 38 convicted (*Corriere*, 23 Apr. 1969).

By the time of the Bussola affair and similar incidents about the same time,[25] the party and its press supporters were ready to pounce on 'contestatori'. The press was using such terms as 'young irrational fanatics', 'rioters', and 'thugs' to describe the students. With the irresponsibility that was typical of Italian journalists, it was quick to conclude that 'actions on the *piazza* have the same fascination for these young people that red and black squadrism had for their predecessors in the 1920s' (quoted in *Nuovo Impegno* 1968: 35).

The response of public opinion, as orchestrated by the conservative press, the DC, and the Right, was quickly reflected in the reactions of the left-wing parties, worried, as always, about their images. The PSI, still in the government, took a cautious position, calling for an investigation and linking the events at the Bussola to the killings at Avola and Battipaglia. The Communists, who had clear memories of Sofri and his friends, quickly stepped back from the attempt to link the Bussola to Avola and Battipaglia (*Corriere*, 3 Jan. 1969), by 8 January, under the criticisms of the DC, they had withdrawn to a politically safer position (*Nuovo Impegno* 1968: 30). By February, the PCI's theoretical journal, *Rinascita*, was observing wryly that, 'as Marxists . . . we are much more interested in how the capitalist makes his millions than in how he spends them' (*Rinascita*, Feb. 1969).

That Potere Operaio was helpless to combat these attacks became evident two days after the events at the Bussola, when a bomb was set off at Camp Darby, the American base outside Pisa (*Corriere*, 4 Jan. 1969). The explosion was either a provocation by the extreme Right or the act of an unrelated group, but its provenance made no difference to a press that had decided to crucify the protagonists of the Bussola in its columns.

At a press conference a week after the events at Marina di

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[24] In the 1968 parliamentary elections, the PCI gained 26.9% of the vote and the PSIUP an additional 4.4%, for a total left-wing vote of over 31%, over six points more than the Communists had gained in 1963 (the PSIUP was only created after the 1963 elections). The PSI, whose progressive wing had been sheared off by the formation of the PSIUP, ran a joint list with the Social-Democratic PSDI (PSU) in 1968. The new list gained only 14.5% of the vote in 1968, compared to a total of 19.9% for the PSI and PSDI in 1963. Data are from Interior Ministry, *Elezione della Camera dei Deputati*, 19 May 1968, 1: 48–9.

[25] The most important of these conflicts was the so-called 'battle of Valle Giulia' in Rome, where students engaged the police in a running battle outside the architecture faculty in May, 1968; see Lumley (1983: 168–70) for this episode.

Pietrasanta, Potere Operaio tried to counter the hostile propaganda of the Right and firm up the crumbling dike of left-wing support. Sofri, as spokesman, promised that more than a hundred witnesses could swear that it was the police who had fired. 'No one did anything but hurl slogans and rotten vegetables at those who were entering the Bussola', he insisted. For Potere Operaio, Sofri maintained, 'the Bussola was only a marginal episode in our political activity, which is designed to make the masses conscious of the contradictions and the ferocity of capitalist society' (*Corriere*, 5 Jan. 1969).

But the bourgeois press literally ate him up alive. Ignoring the evidence of police bullets in the wall behind where the demonstrators had stood, they cited witnesses who testified to seeing 'acts of vandalism, punches and kicks at the patrons of the nightclub, while the forces of order stood by' (*Corriere*, 5 Jan. 1969). Sofri had to admit that when the police rounded people up outside the Bussola, they found bottles of acid and ammonia and balls of clay with glass in them. But 'those weren't ours', he protested (*Corriere* 5 January).

The Lessons of the Bussola

Sofri was right. Attacking the Bussola as a symbol of bourgeois consumption was indeed only a marginal episode for Potere Operaio Toscano, designed to give the high school students affiliated with the group an outlet and gain media coverage. Experienced organizers like Sofri certainly did not mistake a gaudy nightclub in the Versilia for the class struggle. Their problem was that once they ventured outside the university they knew and could utilize skilfully, they had no control over what might happen on the street.

Though Potere Operaio Toscano was only one of many groups in the emerging extraparliamentary Left, this case was archetypical of the movements' dilemma. During the rising tide of mobilization in 1967–8, stimulating and diffusing protest within the university had been remarkably easy, but keeping up the momentum required that protest be diffused to new issues and to targets outside the universities. However, once protest moved outside the university, the tactic of the occupation lost its utility, allies were harder to find, opponents more dangerous, and the state could turn much greater violence against the movement.

The only solution was to find a more institutionally rooted base of operations, to take advantage of new opportunities for mobilization, and to construct organizations. Events such as the Bussola accelerated the creation of national movement organizations whose leaders could build a base in the working class, diffuse protest to new sectors, and link it to emerging social and political issues. But they also showed that it would prove increasingly difficult to keep up the momentum of 1968, as mobilization peaked, the groups competing for support grew, and the representative institutions of capitalist democracy began to regain the initiative.

Other things being equal, the movement that had started in the universities and spread to the high schools might have dissolved into small sectarian groups and harmless debating societies. The reason it did not was that a wave of industrial conflict appeared just as the student movement was running out of steam. The next chapter will take the story of Potere Operaio Toscano to Turin, to the working class, and to its encounter with politics.

11

FROM MOVEMENT TO PARTY: THE EVOLUTION OF LOTTA CONTINUA

The history of Lotta Continua epitomized three fundamental dilemmas of movement organizations: how to expand their influence by stimulating mobilization; how to create an organization that will be capable of channelling mobilization without reproducing the deformations of the Leninist past; and how to stimulate disruption without triggering an uncontrollable spiral of violence and repression.[1]

What follows is not an attempt to retell the history of this remarkable organization.[2] I shall use its experience to illustrate how the political opportunities and constraints surrounding the birth of movement organizations condition their structures and strategies; how competition between them leads to radicalization and violence; and how, as mass mobilization declines, it becomes increasingly difficult for movements to chart a course between the opposite poles of violence and institutionalization.

I THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

In the 1970s and 1980s, much of the debate about new social movements revolved around the issue of collective identity. Early analysts pictured a semi-automatic process of identity formation of either a structural (Pizzorno 1978) or a cultural nature (Alberoni 1979). More recently, Melucci has put forward the notion that movement identities are 'negotiated' in the internal life of a movement (1988). The data we possess on the origins of Lotta Continua do not exclude either structural or cultural origins; but they do reveal a process in which leaders self-consciously and strategically construct an identity out of available political materials.

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[1] I am grateful to Luigi Bobbio, Bruno Dente, Luigi Manconi, Gloria Regonini, Adriano Sofri, and Guido Viale for sharing their recollections about Lotta Continua with me, and to Bobbio and Dente for comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

Since this chapter was written, Sofri and one other Lotta Continua leader, Giorgio Pietrostefani, have been placed under arrest in connection with the murder in 1972 of police commissioner Luigi Calabresi. The outcome of that investigation has not yet emerged. For details, see *la Repubblica*, 29 July 1988; 1–4.

[2] Retelling Lotta Continua's history is especially unnecessary, since it has been done so sensitively and thoroughly by both Luigi Bobbio (1979) and Guido Viale (1978), on whose reconstructions this chapter heavily depends.

For Lotta Continua, the process of identity formation began quite early: in September 1968, when Potere Operaio Toscano held a theoretical conference at which the future form of the movement was already being decided (Bobbio 1979: 18–26; Potere Operaio 1969*b*). The positions that emerged at that meeting made it clear that there was little unanimity on the classical issues of spontaneity, conscious direction, and the leading role of the intellectuals (Bobbio 1979: 24–5). And although Sofri here put forward his famous dictum regarding the role of 'internal' vanguards, his tactical line was far more cautious.

The same divisions appeared at a January 1969 meeting at Pisa, originally called to discuss the problems of the student movement in the high schools (Movimento studentesco pisano 1969). But in the discouragement that followed the Bussola events, the high schools were forgotten and tentative proposals for a new national organization were put forward. The debate—though less sophisticated than the one in September—traced the same themes. Almost everyone agreed on the need for change, but they could not agree on what form the change should take. An organization that was too highly disciplined would simply reproduce the Leninist past; one that was too loosely structured would risk dispersion of the student vanguard. Finally, 'it was decided', states the communiqué that emerged from the January meeting, 'to maintain a tighter contact, above all of an informational type' (Movimento studentesco pisano 1969: 3).

These debates were typical of what was happening everywhere on the extreme Left between mid-1968 and mid-1969 (Viale 1978: 62). Although it seemed clear that the student movement was in decline, some still insisted on continuing its anti-authoritarian, decentralized line and rejected formal organization for 'committees of action' on the model of the French May (Movimento studentesco pisano 1969: 3). Others proposed to create a 'political office' and federal structures to compete with the Maoist groups that were currently flourishing (Bobbio 1979: 18–19). Others went further, proposing a formal division between a 'mass organization' that would make 'trade union-type demands' and a 'revolutionary students' organization' that would serve to 'orient the student masses' (Movimento studentesco pisano 1969: 2). Leninism had raised a tentative finger within the movement.

Sofri rejected both spontaneism and Leninism but nevertheless gradually moved towards the idea of creating a revolutionary party. In the September debate, he had thought it premature to 'lock ourselves in during a national situation that is still fluid' (Bobbio 1979: 19). But by January, there were unnamed 'comrades of Pisa and Turin' who were calling for a tighter relationship between the vanguard and the base of the movement. They saw the primary goal as the creation of a mass political consciousness antagonistic to the system through the construction of a 'network of informal grassroots committees around the country' (Movimento studentesco pisano 1969: 1). These 'unnamed comrades' appear to have been Sofri and his friends from Turin.

Sofri's ideas had a synthetic appeal that few of the formulas put forward by minority groups on the extreme Left possessed. Discouraged by the crisis in the student movement, many were deserting the schools and turning to the workers as if to an idol. But Sofri's idea was to preserve the enthusiasm of the student movement alongside the force of the workers in a coalition of 'internal vanguards' which would permit the party both to stimulate mobilization in the factories and to organize protest wherever conflict was found. Workerism was to be 'socialized' just as the student movement was being workerized.

In the short run, the most significant political outcome was the alliance between the 'comrades of Pisa and Turin'—two of the most militant parts of the student movement—founded on a hypothesis of worker–student collaboration. Sofri's branch of Potere Operaio Toscano broke from both its spontaneist and Leninist wings, and Sofri moved to Turin in the spring. In the long run, the strategically-relevant outcome was the refusal to reject the movementist heritage of 1968 for either workerism or Leninism. This was crystallized in the attempt to gain support from the FIAT workers in Turin in the summer of 1969.

II FIAT, 1969: COMPETITION AND CONFRONTATION

Although it has been memorialized as the high point of the 'Hot Autumn', the FIAT conflict of the summer of 1969 actually came late in the development of the insurgent working-class movement and produced little that was new in terms of either forms of conflict, social actors, or goals. FIAT was in reality the 'point of arrival' of a movement that had begun at Porto Marghera, Valdagno, and the Milan area a year earlier (Bobbio 1979: 27). What was truly different about FIAT was its national visibility, the unusual weakness of the unions and the number of new movement organizations that flocked to the scene.

For FIAT was not just another firm, and Turin was more than an industrial town. The city was the heart of Italian capitalism; from here, a defeat for the bosses would reverberate down the whole peninsula. The firm was also an important factor in national politics and so received an unusual amount of attention from the press and the political class. And although FIAT was atypical, both because of its economic and political importance and because of the weakness of the unions, what happened there influenced the entire strategy of the unions in the national contract negotiations of the following autumn.[3]

The struggle at FIAT was far from unexpected. All through the winter and spring of 1969, minority groups on the left had been watching the development of contract negotiations among the skilled, unionized workers in FIAT's auxiliary shops who manned the presses (PSIUP, 1969; Viale 1978: 159). The first sign of extraordinary militance among the workers was the 'internal marches' around the factory that 'broke down the isolation between work groups' and upset the relations between workers and foremen (Viale 1978: 160). By late May, the metal unions representing the *ausiliari* had signed a poor contract with management, which was a signal for unskilled assembly line workers—without union support or even a platform—to block production in their shops. Conflict leapt from shop to shop, following the route of the internal marches (Viale 1978: 161). It was at this point—when unskilled assembly line workers were already rejecting the unions' step-by-step strategy—that the minority groups on the left intervened (Bobbio 1979: 28).

Who were these groups and how did they intervene? For several months, a small cadre of Turin University students had been patrolling the gate of FIAT's giant Mirafiori works, handing out leaflets to the workers going off shift and striking up conversations with them. A questionnaire distributed by the Turinese Potere Operaio showed both a remarkable 'availability' for mobilization among the workers and a surprising degree of sympathy for the students (Rieser 1969: 30). As classes came to an end, the number of students milling around the factory gates at the end of every shift swelled into hundreds.

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[3] The centrality of FIAT, and of the metals sector in general, for industrial relations in Italy is well illustrated by Golden (1988).

In May, militants associated with the journal *La Classe* arrived in Turin,[*] along with several minor groups from Milan and remnants of the *Quaderni Rossi* group from Turin. Probably the strongest and most experienced group in the worker–student assemblies were those associated with *La Classe*, representing the more orthodox trunk of extraparliamentary workerism (Magna 1978: 339–42). FIAT was literally made for them, for the workers were combative, the unions were weak, and the city was the heartland of workerist political culture (Golden 1988).

Most of the leaders of the Turin University student movement did not arrive until later, at the same time as Sofri and his friends from Pisa. While the *La Classe* militants did much of the hard work of establishing contact with the workers, the Turinese students' greater numbers and their local roots ensured their presence, not only at the FIAT Mirafiori works, but at Rivalta, Lingotto, and other sections of the giant company (Bobbio 1979: 29). It was a survey carried out by former Turinese Potere Operaio students in April that demonstrated a high level of sympathy for the students (Viale 1978: 168).

The workers and students soon moved to a bar outside the Mirafiori plant, where they were quickly labelled 'worker–student assemblies'. The slogan *'la lotta continua'*—a rallying cry from the recent events in Paris (*la lutte continue*)—became the umbrella term for a loose coalition of student militants and radical workers who met everyday in the bar and quickly attracted the attention of left-wing militants from all over northern Italy. When the bar became too small to hold the nightly assemblies, they were moved to the hospital of the Molinette, where the influence of the Turinese and their Pisan friends could be much greater.

Luigi Bobbio has emphasized the unity among the radical groups in Turin in their common desire to support the FIAT workers (1979: 19). But even at their moment of greatest cooperation, in the spring and summer of 1969, they were seared by ferocious ideological polemics (Viale 1978: 177) revolving largely around the role of the students in the class struggle. The most important differences were between the *La Classe* group and the Turin-Pisa militants. Although they had in common their conviction that the interests of the industrial workers must be at the centre of any revolutionary party, they differed in the degree of exclusiveness of their workerism, in their attitude towards the student movement, and in the instruments and appeals they thought necessary to bring the workers to their side.

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[*] There were several name changes in this period that confuse matters. Bobbio summarizes the story in this way: in early 1969, members of the Potere Operaio group that had been active in Porto Marghera in 1966–8 joined with veterans of the student movement in Rome, Milan, and Turin to form a new group that published the journal *La Classe*. From this group there emerged in August 1969 a new national group called Potere Operaio (Bobbio 1979: 29). It was this new group's pre-emptive seizure of the label 'worker's power' which led Sofri and his friends to take the name 'Lotta Continua' for their journal and thus for their new group.

For *La Classe*, the factory was everything, and capitalism was conceived in radically economistic terms; for the Pisan and Turinese militants, exploitation was everywhere and so were the opportunities for mobilization. For *La Classe*, wages were at the core of any revolutionary appeal, not only because they were what the workers cared about, but because only radical wage struggles could 'destroy the plan of the bosses' (Rieser 1969: 15). The appeal of their competitors was less economistic and more subjective. Alongside wages, the group aimed at other production line issues, and—outside the factory—at the problems of immigrants, housing, and other groups, which it linked more or less generically to the proletariat (Rieser 1969: 16).

These different versions of workerism led each group to a different conception of organization. Because the *La Classe* militants saw wage struggles as everything, for them organization had to focus on radicalizing the conflict between workers and bosses.[5] To the emerging Lotta Continua group, this approach was 'profoundly reductionist and mechanistic' (Bobbio 1979: 36). For them, what was most important was 'the capacity for subjective initiatives with which the class learns to invest every aspect of the struggle' (Bobbio 1979: 36). Organization meant creating a presence not only in the factory but in working-class neighbourhoods, among immigrants and within other social groups—what they would later mean by 'socializing the class struggle'.

These differences did not hamper the ability of the two groups to intervene in the conflicts at FIAT. On the contrary, we sense from the documentary sources a competitive radicalization in which each group had its own contacts among the workers, produced competing propaganda efforts, and launched its own initiatives (Bobbio 1979: 30–1). Even at this stage, polemics were bitter. As early as July 1969, Guido Viale, a future Lotta Continua leader, claimed that 'the economistic and workerist background of the comrades of *La Classe* makes them endemically incapable of grasping all the political implications of a struggle of these dimensions [at FIAT]' (republished in Viale 1973: 58).

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[5] The new Potere Operaio was strongly influenced by the experience of Porto Marghera, but also by what Bobbio calls 'the hypothesis of May', which led its leaders to call for the 'generalization of the struggle around the objective of worker autonomy', beginning with the demand for wage increases, then moving first to the refusal to produce, and finally to a proposal to link wages to the needs of the workers (Bobbio 1979: 36).

As for the future Lotta Continua, it was attacked in *La Classe* for 'intellectual ideologism and purely verbal revolutionism' and for harbouring a 'humanitarian spirit that doesn't know the difference between the working class and a home for the aged' (Dina 1970: 147). Viale, for his part, ridiculed the attackers as 'the theorists of the working-class science, the militants of the practice of the objective . . . the cultists of an *a priori*, ready-made working-class viewpoint' (Viale 1978: 177).

The increasing polarization between the two groups had a demoralizing effect on their worker allies, for, like all polarization, it led to abstraction from the concrete issues that animated the workers. It also reduced the influence of more judicious spirits who might have tempered the groups' opposing ideological formulas with the fruit of experience, such as former *Quaderni Rossi* militants like Vittorio Rieser.[6] Most important, their competition spurred these two groups to make separate efforts to mobilize the workers. In future years, Lotta Continua would never get over the fear of being outbid for working-class support by Potere Operaio.

In September, *La Classe* adopted the old rubric 'Potere Operaio', founding a journal of the same name and a national extraparliamentary organization. Sofri and his friends took up the umbrella label of the student–worker assemblies—*la lotta continua*—as their slogan, planning a journal by that name, to the irritation of their competitors. This competition for labels seemed at the time a mere question of jostling for space; but in the organizational developments of the next few years, the theme of 'worker's power' would quite literally exclude other initiatives from Potere Operaio's repertoire, while the theme of 'the struggle continues' would characterize Lotta Continua's search for new arenas of conflict.

[6] Rieser, who came out of the old *Quaderni Rossi* group and was now associated with its *Quaderni Piacentini* offshoot, warned that FIAT would not be typical of other Italian firms. On the unusual nature of FIAT, see Rieser (1969: 19), Bobbio (1979: 38), and Golden (1988: chs. 2 and 7).

III BRINGING THE WORKERS THE WORD

'Continuing the struggle' that had begun at FIAT-Mirafiori in the summer of 1969 became the working hypothesis around which Lotta Continua built its organization (Viale 1978: 213). It was also the editorial line of its new journal. 'It [the journal] had to be called *Lotta Continua* in order to underline the continuity between the extraordinary mass experience of the FIAT and the new national proposal' for the generalization of the struggle, recalled Bobbio a decade later (1979: 41). Journalism became a central weapon in the generalization of the class struggle. In Sofri's words, 'We wanted the working class of Bagnoli [the giant steel complex near Naples] to know that they could do the same thing as the workers of Turin had done at Mirafiori.'[7]

The journal adopted a simple language to speak to the workers and avoided the doctrinaire formulations of the extreme Left. The urge to 'give the word' to the protagonists of the class struggle led to the publication of debates among workers rather than intellectuals; to a much greater use of photographs and cartoons than had been seen before; and to the adoption of 'expressive elements of mass communications' (Bobbio 1979: 72). *Lotta Continua* not only told people where the action was, it was a part of that action.

But there was another side to the journal's popular image: its editors chose demagogic headlines and provocative picture stories in preference to serious political analysis (Violi 1977: 178). In the name of socializing the working class, *Lotta Continua* neglected, even sneered at, theoretical debate. Years later, Sofri would admit that he had 'produced a great quantity of ideas and thrown them in a lump at the organization', without worrying about 'the formation of a general opinion base that would turn these ideas into an effective practical force' (1977: 78).

Lotta Continua also tried to reshape protest in the high schools—which had exploded in the fall of 1969—into a movement on behalf of the workers. As Bobbio explains, 'If a few months earlier we were emphasizing the autonomous role of the students, now we affirmed their subordination to working-class struggles' (1979: 51).[8] Lotta Continua was focusing its efforts on where the class struggle was;

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[7] Sofri interview, 19 Mar. 1986.

[8] Bobbio, Sofri, and Viale, whose positions differed on many issues, agreed in interviews that Lotta Continua's denial of the autonomy of the high school students' educational concerns was a fundamental strategic error.

since the greatest disruptive potential was now in the factories, the students' protests about grades and curricular changes seemed merely a sideshow. This failure to take seriously the concerns of the high school students would have more serious consequences later on.

The intention of Lotta Continua's leaders to assign a hegemonic role to the workers was also affirmed in the party's meetings, for 'external' militants—students and intellectuals—were not even permitted to speak up at these meetings. This restriction was imposed to give the workers the opportunity to 'bring about their own political formation' (quoted in Bobbio 1979: 68). But in the name of forming a new working-class vanguard, the role of the intellectuals remained unfocused, and the role of the high school students was reduced to that of shock troops in the class struggle of the workers.

Workers, Councils, and 'High Points' of Struggle

Lotta Continua was deeply marked by its origins in another way as well. As was the case at FIAT, the new radical groups could have their greatest impact where the unions were weak and the workers were both combative and relatively untouched by union discipline. This experience led to underestimating the power of the unions and ignoring the appeal to the workers of the new institutions emerging in the factory from the Hot Autumn, that is, the councils of delegates.

In the spring of 1969, the metal unions had negotiated with FIAT for a plan to create a network of 'assembly line delegates' (Bobbio 1979: 32). Although the FIAT plan had representative elements, it was not aimed at creating committees of agitation like those which had emerged at Pirelli in 1968 but only technical bodies designed to give the unions a presence on the assembly line. By summer, the delegate plan turned out to be even more technical and less representative than union leaders had hoped.

The most active workers in the conflicts of the spring and summer saw the delegate plan as little more than the unions' 'attempt to regain control of the spontaneous struggle by giving it an official, juridical form' (quoted in Bobbio 1979: 33). 'We are all delegates' was the slogan sweeping Mirafiori in the tumultuous conflicts of the spring and summer. Lotta Continua chose to oppose the delegates as an initiative that 'came from above, from trade union initiative; not from below, as an initiative of the workers' (Viale 1978: 162).

With the wisdom granted by hindsight, we can see that the conditions at FIAT in the summer of 1969 were not going to prove universal. Elsewhere in Italy, the councils of delegates came out of both militant shopfloor currents and from the left wing of the unions. They eventually managed the almost continual plant-level strikes of 1970–2. In the Milan metalworking factories, for example, where the most militant workers were far less alienated from the unions than at FIAT, the councils brought together union and non-union militants. In Porto Marghera, it was at the initiative of the old Internal Commission that a factory council was formed (Perna 1980: 7).

But Lotta Continua's leaders were hoping for 'the *detachment* of the struggles of the proletariat from the political control of the labour movement' (quoted in Bobbio 1979: 47). Thus they opposed the contract negotiations that would lead to the stunning union victories of the Hot Autumn and rejected participation in the councils of delegates just as these were rapidly being diffused as the unions' grassroots representative institutions throughout the country.

All the extraparliamentary groups had to come to grips with these new organisms, and they did so in a variety of ways. Il Manifesto greeted them with near-mythic enthusiasm, as if they were the reborn factory councils of 1919–21; La Classe/Potere Operaio tried to organize 'political committees' within them (*Potere Operaio*, 5 Dec. 1970); Avanguardia Operaia tried to participate as a faction within the councils and, wherever possible, to maintain a separate presence with its own unitary base committees (Avanguardia Operaia 1972). But Lotta Continua, drawing from its experience at FIAT the lesson that the councils were 'essentially instruments of control by the unions over the workers', urged its supporters to boycott the major institutional gain that the workers had achieved from the Hot Autumn (Bobbio 1979: 60).[9]

Advanced Conditions and Backward Situations

An important tactical motivation behind Lotta Continua's rejection of the councils was the desire to combat union hegemony over the emerging factory movement.[10] But the episode of the councils was symptomatic of a broader dilemma that Lotta Continua share with all movement organizations. In refusing the councils, Lotta Continua chose movement over institution; as Bobbio puts it, it behaved as if the most 'advanced' conditions could be generalized to the 'backward situations' of the rest of the country (Bobbio 1979: 65).

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[9] Only in 1972 was the error formally recognized and the participation of Lotta Continua militants in the factory councils legitimized. Bobbio (1979: 136) notes that a large proportion of these militants had already been participating in the councils.

[10] In an editorial of Feb. 1970, entitled 'No to the union delegates!', it was argued that 'the figure of the delegate is no more than the unions'—and the bosses'—response to the dangerous increase in spontaneous struggles'; quoted in Bobbio (1979: 60).

When mobilization is on the increase—as it was in 1967–9—movement organizations can challenge or ignore existing institutions. But as mobilization declines, fewer new entrants are available, repression intensifies, and people prefer to participate in institutions that will provide more certain, if less exciting, rewards. A true movement organization must continue to emphasize movement over organization, or risk losing the initiative to more institutionalized groups. The major resource of a movement organization is disruption.

But the viability of such a strategy depends upon the continued availability of a mass base. As long as this is available, the strategy of movement will continue to pay off. But as mobilization declines, movement organizations must either organize their supporters within stable organizations and institutions or radicalize conflict still further. By rejecting the councils of delegates, Lotta Continua enhanced its reputation for radicalism; but the costs were great: it denied itself a role in the emerging institutions of factory decision-making just as the mass base for radical action was shrinking. It was thus reduced to sniping at the unions or proposing alternatives to the councils, just as the latter were proving a victory for the working class.[11]

IV ORGANIZING FOR MOVEMENT

If it was not going to participate in the councils, how did Lotta Continua propose to organize its working-class followers? In the September 1968 debate, Sofri had not been hostile to organization. Rather, he argued, 'what is unacceptable is the Leninist conception in which revolutionary consciousness . . . is the product of an external vanguard formed from Marxist intellectuals who have left their class roots behind' (1968). To replace this conception, he proposed 'a process of unification and connection of the *internal*

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[11] Bobbio's treatment of the *momenti alti* and the *situazione arretrate* implies that Lotta Continua failed to ask whether the former could be generalized to the latter (1979: 64). My view is that, once a movementist strategy is chosen, a group *must* behave as if the 'high points' are universally valid.

vanguards within individual situations of struggle' (1968: emphasis in original).

Since it was conflict that would form the workers' revolutionary class-consciousness—'the violent, brutal, and inelegant logic of the struggle of the proletariat for its emancipation' (quoted in Bobbio 1979: 61)—it was only by intensifying and diffusing the proletariat's capacity for conflict that the process Sofri envisaged would be completed. 'The problem', he affirmed, 'is not to put yourself at the head of the masses, but to be the head of the masses' (1968: 21–2). 'Lotta Continua', wrote Guido Viale with some pride, 'had neither ideology, nor theory, organizational structure, party discipline, programme, nor resolutions to lay out its tasks' (1978: 213).

Lotta Continua's organization would be created on political—and not trade union—lines. How would these be developed? 'Out of a growing process of struggle' (Bobbio 1979: 60). Who would control them? The workers themselves. What organizational form was proposed to carry forward this struggle? Around this issue debate only *began* in 1969. The project for organizing the vanguards of the masses from within raised objections from both a Leninist (*Nuovo Impegno* 1969) and a spontaneist (della Mea 1970) viewpoint. It was not completed until 1973, when the cycle of protest was ending.

Sofri's contribution to the debate was imaginative, but it was stronger on inspiration than theory:

> We believe that a fundamental moment of organization, of liberation, and of initiative by the workers is a march of 10,000 workers, like the one at Mirafiori. The thing that most resembles a soviet in this phase of the Italian class struggle is that worker's march. (Quoted in Bobbio 1979: 61)

The idea that a worker's march around a factory could be the equivalent of a soviet made good propaganda, but it diverted the debate to one around symbols, rather than structures. In the beginning, writes Viale, Lotta Continua 'lived as a state of mind and a practice of the struggle' (1978: 214). The task of providing the workers with an organization more stable than Sofri's image of 'a march of 10,000 workers' was left for another time.[12]

Organization at the national level remained rudimentary until 1973 as well. In the first months, every weekend brought a tumultuous new assembly in a different city, along the lines of the old Potere Operaio Toscano practice of 'nomadism' (Viale 1978: 214). Later, a national political committee was formed, but it was little more than an assembly of delegates from various local groups. Only in 1973 was a true national organization created, and even then it allowed little room for collective reflection. Decisions were made at national conferences, but it was left for the group around Sofri to implement them. Even in 1970, a sympathetic critic like Luciano della Mea saw a growing gap between the 'official' voice of the movement—which was sounding more and more like the 'leaderism' of the old party system—and the passionate verbal interventions of the membership (1970: 53).

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[12] In 1971 an attempt was made to cooperate with the other main extraparliamentary groups in organizing 'united workers' assemblies' at the FIAT, Pirelli, and Alfa Romeo plants (Bobbio 1979: 85–7). But by this time, shopfloor militance had declined, conflicts soon developed between the groups, and the experiment was eventually abandoned.

In this antipathy to formal organization, Lotta Continua was a harbinger of the new social movements of the 1970s and 1980s. But, as in many of those cases, the rejection of formal hierarchy had far from democratic outcomes. Reflecting on his leadership years later, Sofri observed that his most grievous error had been what, in the rich Tuscan dialect, he called *ganzismo*, a combination of 'ability to get things done, going to the heart of the matter, while caring little about what anyone else says' (1977: 74). In the absence of a well-articulated national and grassroots organization,'a handful of people'—mainly old friends from Turin and Pisa—'considered Lotta Continua as a kind of private patrimony which they could dispose of without consulting anybody' (Sofri 1977: 75). The strategy of movement had produced an oligarchy.

V FROM ONE CAMPAIGN TO ANOTHER

A major result of Lotta Continua's emphasis on movement was the bewildering series of policy shifts and mobilization campaigns that marked the group's short history. When Sofri went to jail, Lotta Continua discovered that criminals are part of the proletariat; when a revolt broke out in Reggio Calabria, the South became the future heartland of the revolution. These policy gyrations led the institutional Left to judge Lotta Continua guilty of a lack of seriousness, while the Right accused it of demagogy. But the main cause of the mobility of its tactical initiatives lay elsewhere. A movement's vocation lies in disruption. Without conflict, it lacks the resources to mobilize supporters, attract new adherents, and remain in the public eye. As in its choice of movement over the new institutions in the factory, Lotta Continua was forced to seek new sources of conflict or give up its claim to being a movement of the masses.

From the autumn of 1969 on, Lotta Continua undertook a series of mobilization campaigns, each constructed around a single theme, social actor, or policy issue. These campaigns began informally. For example, when immigrant workers headed south for the holidays, they were furnished with information for their hometowns, and a recruitment campaign was launched in the South (Viale 1978; 166). When wives of army draftees went to visit their husbands in camp, they carried along propaganda in their handbags, thus risking imprisonment. People visiting individuals in jail carried messages to organizers to foment prison revolts.[13]

But some of these campaigns were more formal and more durable. Let us survey some examples of them:

The damned of the earth

Lotta Continua publicized and helped to diffuse protests in the prisons not only through its own militants who were 'inside' for political offences but also through external correspondants.[14] The campaign began when Sofri, arrested for participation in a street barricade, participated in a revolt in Turin's Le Nuove. Because they were the lowest stratum of the urban underclass, and possessed an instinctive combativeness and hostility to authority, prisoners were seen as a natural extension of Lotta Continua's broadening concept of 'socializing the class struggle'.

In the past, 'political' prisoners had been kept separate from ordinary criminals so as to avoid political contagion. But after 1968–9, so many labour organizers and students were arrested in clashes with the police that physical separation was impossible.[15] The themes popularized by the extraparliamentary Left soon appeared in the slogans of revolting prisoners, which became increasingly detailed and programmatic (Viale 1978: 250).

For Lotta Continua, there was no fundamental difference between political and common prisoners. As long as criminals were on the streets, they were egoists and were 'unrecoverable' to the class movement; only when they were locked up could they learn the habit of collaborating among themselves and rebelling against the most institutionalized form of repression, the prison system. The prison became a school for revolution in which the asocial, rebellious prisoner became a proletarian.[16]

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[13] For obvious reasons, the sources of these examples must remain anonymous.

[14] One of these militants, a philosophy student at Pavia named Irene Invernizzi, published a book about the prisons; see Invernizzi (1973). She had been investigated by the police on suspicion of spreading rebellion among prisoners through code words that were supposed to have been included in the letters she wrote them (*Corriere*, 4 Nov. 1972).

[15] Interview with Guido Neppi Modona, New York, 20 June 1987.

From the end of 1970, Lotta Continua operated its own 'Prison Commission', which aimed at maintaining contact with prisoners whom its militants had met in prison. From June 1970, the newspaper published a regular column, 'The damned of the earth', in which memoirs smuggled out of prison, reports of prison riots and repressive actions, and lists of demands periodically appeared (Bobbio 1979: 83). Many of these were eventually published in book form (Lotta Continua 1972).

Lotta Continua also maintained contact with a network of lawyers who were willing to work on behalf of prison reform and to get people out of jail. In addition, it attempted to organize released prisoners through a kind of militant social work.[17] The prisoners' movement rose to a crescendo in 1973, when *Lotta Continua* published over 150 reports of prison revolts, which converged with a movement for prison reform in Parliament and in the press (Neppi Modona 1976; Viale 1978: 250).

By 1975, all of these efforts had been aborted. First, in 1974, an armed group of former prisoners close to Lotta Continua, the NAP (Armed Proletarian Nuclei), were discovered by the police (Viale 1978: 251). Lotta Continua responded by closing down both its Prison Commission and its attempts to organize former prisoners. Then, in the wake of a series of spectacular but unpolitical kidnappings by criminal elements, the political climate in Parliament turned against prison reform (Neppi Modona 1976: 361ff.). Finally, as terrorism became a serious threat to public order, the controversial Reale Law was passed, making the organization of criminals or ex-criminals a serious legal, as well as political risk (Viale 1978: 251).

Take the city!

The most successful mobilization theme in Lotta Continua's history began in 1971. 'Take the city' was the theme of the group's second national congress. Although the campaign followed logically from the 1969 decision to mobilize people around the workers' subjective interests—housing, urban services, quality of life—it was devised as an overall strategy only when the group's efforts in the factory began to flag (*Lotta Continua*, 20 Nov. 1970) and when a number of other groups, including the unions, began to organize around the needs of tenants, utility users and urban groups in general.

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[16] Summarized from a document of the 'Nucleus of San Vittore', in Milan, one of the centres of prisoners' revolts. Published in *Lotta Continua*, 16 Dec. 1971; quoted in Bobbio (1979: 83).

[17] Lotta Continua's campaign in the prisons is a chapter of its history that still remains to be written.

It was from such campaigns that many of the urban movements' greatest successes came; from rent strikes by public housing tenants, to 'self-reduction' of municipal utility rates and public transportation fares, to expert and aggressive attempts to change urban general plans. Of all Lotta Continua's activities, this was the one that could most effectively have drawn on the ability and skills of its middle-class militants and advanced the group's strategic goal of 'socializing the class struggle'.

But the urge towards movement undermined the potential gains of these campaigns, which depended on dogged house-to-house organizing and on developing a high degree of technical specialization. While groups like Milan's Unione Inquilini and the SUNIA were learning the ins-and-outs of urban housing politics, Lotta Continua tried to trigger the same mechanism of revolt as they had seen in the successful Viale Tibaldi occupations in Milan elsewhere (Bobbio 1979: 82). Once again, 'continuing the struggle' took precedence over organizing the masses, which could mean extending it from 'advanced situations' to where it had little chance to succeed.

'Now that the moment approaches'

A less successful strategic line dated from 1971, when Sofri, having just emerged from prison, made a pilgrimage to the South in an attempt to stimulate mobilization in one of the regions where the movement was weakest. He made an appearance in—of all places—Reggio Calabria, where a violent eight-month battle had been waged against police and the army to protest against the allocation of the new regional capital to Catanzaro. The Left was slow to see the revolutionary potential of a conflict that quickly came under the management of the extreme Right (Ferraris 1970).

Lotta Continua's tendency to define the proletariat to include subordinate social groups made it more sensitive than others to the revolutionary potential of the southern lumpenproletariat. 'Reggio was a great victory for spontaneity and marked the definitive defeat of spontaneism', declared Sofri, with his usual flair for paradox (Bobbio 1979: 91). Viale wrote, 'The rebels of Reggio Calabria are the men of 1968' (1978: 232). While the PCI condemned the 'right-wing management' of the revolt of Reggio, Lotta Continua was organizing meetings of solidarity with Reggini in Milan and Turin, urging the Left—which had been caught unawares—to 'tear proletarian Reggio from the hands of the Fascists, the bosses, and those who falsely represent the people' (Bobbio 1979: 91).

It was the absence of the revolutionary Left from the poverty-stricken districts of the South, Sofri and Viale reasoned, that explained why the Fascists were able to take over what was really a popular struggle (Viale 1978: 235). Sofri went to the South to proclaim a new front in the continuing struggle. This resulted temporarily in the publication of a newspaper, *'Mo che il tempo si avvicina*, and the creation of twenty-six new sections (Bobbio 1979: 93). But it did not succeed with the southern proletariat and lumpenproletariat; the elections of 1975 did bring about a political 'earthquake' in the South, but it was the Communist Party that profited from it.

Though Lotta Continua was more successful than any of the other extraparliamentary groups in organizing through disruption, the campaigns it launched left little of substance behind them. In the factories, the unions were already re-establishing themselves just as Lotta Continua began to implement a strategy of conflict; in the urban areas, the strategy of 'let us take the city' preceded the largest Communist electoral gain in postwar history; in the prisons, reform was initiated in 1973, only to be overwhelmed in the wave of violence of the years that followed; and in the South, the revolt of Reggio was followed by the classical strategem of the parliamentary system, the passage of a package of public-works bills (Viale 1978: 234). Mobilization paved the way not for revolution, but for patronage politics, repression, and gains for the institutional Left.

From our perspective two decades later, the history of Lotta Continua seems to resemble the progress of a man who sets out to cross a turbulent stream, hoping to arrive at a fixed point on the other side. He imagines that he is in control of his own momentum, but the speed and strength of the stream are quite outside his control. If he stops on a rock to get his bearings, he risks falling into the water. He makes one tactical choice after another to get across, but without considering where any of them will lead. Ultimately, and almost unintentionally, he reaches the other side, far from the point at which he wished to land. But what does he find there?

VI THE TEMPTATIONS OF VIOLENCE

The campaign that was to have the most profound effects on Lotta Continua's future was the campaign against the resurgence of fascism and against the elements within the state that seemed to be in complicity with it (Viale 1978: 216–22). The campaign was touched off by the Piazza Fontana bombing in December 1969 and by the 'accidental death' of the anarchist Giuseppe Pinelli that followed it (see Chapter 12). It gave Lotta Continua an opportunity to work with other groups on the Left but also to outflank them. Finally, in providing the rationale that violence was a necessary defence against reaction, the campaign contributed to the culture of violence and cost Lotta Continua a great deal of mass support.

The Campaign against State Fascism

That there was a contradiction between violent attacks against fascism and gaining a mass base was already evident in 1969 when *Lotta Continua* launched its campaign after the Piazza Fontana bombing. On the one hand, the newspaper joined others in denouncing the shadowy 'investigation' that led to Pinelli's 'jump' into the courtyard of the Questura of Milan (see Chapter 12).[18] But on the other, it was unwilling to follow these groups in going on the defensive against fascism and repression. 'We wanted to show that we weren't *afraid* of the Fascists,' said one respondent many years later.

Not only extraparliamentary groups such as the Milanese Movimento Studentesco and Il Manifesto, but the unions, the PCI, and mass organizations such as the ANPI (the National Association of Italian Partisans) were becoming alarmed at the signs of state-sanctioned terror which they saw as portents of a repetition of 1921–2. From 1969 on, a loose coalition of left-wing groups organized a series of demonstrations against 'state terrorism', police repression, and neo-fascism. Around these themes the Left and the extreme Left could unite, despite their policy differences.

[18] The protracted trial of the anarchist Pietro Valpreda, accused of the Piazza Fontana massacre after Pinelli's death, was the major issue around which the campaign revolved. So central was the trial to Lotta Continua's campaign against repression that, from February to April 1972, the group published a daily newspaper called 'Processo Valpreda'.

Lotta Continua made a few steps in the direction of cooperation with the other groups on the left. But its technique of 'counter-information' and militant anti-fascism was too demagogic and too shrill for some of its potential allies. It relied on headlines with shock value, on photographs, on crude investigative journalism, and on naming the enemies of the proletariat. Its screaming headlines and provocative espousal of revolutionary violence landed more than one of its editors in court.

Lotta Continua's campaign against fascism itself led to violence and repression. It tried to appeal to ex-resistance fighters, to the unions, and to the parties of the Left to join ranks against the threat of state-sanctioned fascism; but at the same time, its violent language and behaviour provoked the police and the far Right to attack it, and left it open to charges of being itself a threat to law and order.

Two examples: at a 'national day of struggle' against repression in 1971, a conflict with the police resulted in which 56 people were arrested (Bobbio 1979: 88); in the election campaign of 1972, Lotta Continua campaigned on the slogan 'The fascists must not have the right to speak' (Bobbio 1979: 101). As long as anti-fascism was conceived of as a street movement instead of a drive to reinstate democratic order, Lotta Continua contributed to the atmosphere of violence, which—in a period of demobilization—could only hurt it, as we shall see below.

From Mass to Vanguard Violence

Lotta Continua had always seen violence as a necessary evil in the class war—but only *mass* violence. In the civil war atmosphere of the campaign against fascism, the journal encouraged denunciations and shamings, and threatened punishments to those suspected of sympathy for the Fascists. It did not hesitate to name and to personally attack 'enemies of the proletariat'. Lists of such enemies were compiled; cases of popular insubordination were glorified; the public humiliation of personnel managers was described with approval. In this phase, Bobbio recalls, 'the slogan "Kidnap the bosses!" recurs more and more often in the propaganda of Lotta Continua' (1979: 81).

A symptomatic case was that of the death of Commissioner Calabresi, who was in charge of the Piazza Fontana case. Following Pinelli's death, *Lotta Continua* had condemned him as an assassin

(Bobbio 1979: 104). When Calabresi was murdered in 1972, the newspaper was torn between condemning political homicide—which, it said, was not 'the decisive weapon for the emancipation of the masses'—and its refusal to deplore a murder 'in which the exploited can see their own desire for justice' (Bobbio 1979: 104–5). Sixteen years later, a former Lotta Continua militant who claimed to have participated in the murder accused Sofri and an aide, Giorgio Pietrostefani, of having ordered it. Sofri, Pietrostefani and one other militant were arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to commit murder and have still to be put on trial (*La Repubblica*, 29 July 1988: 1–4).

In a Catholic country in which the value of human life is a paramount cultural value, Lotta Continua's apparent indifference to political murder was a symbolic step that created serious internal divisions and hampered the group's collaboration with others on the left. In an important article, written under a pseudonym in another journal, Luciano Pero criticized his own group when he condemned the 'left-wing opportunism' of 'those who are willing to leave it to the masses to decide, case by case, on whether acts of violence are legitimate' (Pero 1972).

We have less evidence about the effect of Calabresi's murder and of Lotta Continua's refusal to condemn it on its relations with the workers. However, from a fugitive document from the Pirelli-Bicocca CUB, it seems likely that it was an object of discord within the working class. In this key factory, collaboration had recently been established between workers affiliated with Lotta Continua, Avanguardia Operaia and other leftist groups in the factory. When Calabresi was killed, the Lotta Continua contingent, following the national line of their party, insisted in calling the murder an act of proletarian justice. Intergroup collaboration, a frail plant at best, did not long survive the resulting bitterness.[19]

The split within the workers of the Pirelli-Bicocca plant was representative of what was beginning to happen around the country. As violence escalated between Left and Right and between the movements and the police, the groups on the extraparliamentary left faced the difficult choice of either adopting more radical stands, which made them seem to support 'vanguard violence', or cautioning their militants not to rise to Fascist provocations, and thus appearing to cave in to intimidation.

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[19] With Avanguardia Operaia, Lotta Continua had constructed an AOU (Unified Workers' Assembly) at the Bicocca plant. When Calabresi was killed, the Lotta Continua militants in the assembly insisted on defining the murder as an act of proletarian justice, in contrast with their comrades, who saw it as a provocation; see Gruppo di compagni (1972: 3) for a more detailed discussion of this incident.

If its only goal had been to assure the workers of its democratic credentials, Lotta Continua could have refused to be provoked into violence. But this was the step that its arch-enemy, the PCI, was currently taking; to have followed that path would have allowed Lotta Continua's radical competitors to brand it as no braver than the Communists in the face of reaction. In a competitive social movement sector, when the most extreme groups adopt organized violent stands, it is difficult for any group to come out against violence.

Potere Operaio, in a significant step towards armed struggle, but also in a sign of its weakness, proclaimed the imminence of an insurrection (Bobbio 1979: 99). The Milanese Movimento Studentesco, in contrast, accepted the policy of restraint of the official Left and took a defensive posture against fascism. *Lotta Continua* tried to straddle the issue. On the one hand, it put forward a cautious long-term political analysis that recognized 'that the enemy possesses a broad range of weapons' (Bobbio 1979: 98); but on the other, it announced a militant line of 'general conflict' to compete with Potere Operaio's call for an insurrection.

The culmination of Lotta Continua's acceptance of the legitimacy of vanguard violence came at a closed national meeting in Rimini in April 1972. In his preparatory document, Sofri called for the preparation of 'a general struggle, with a political programme that has the state as its adversary and that has as its instruments the exercise of revolutionary violence, *both by the masses and the vanguard* [emphasis added]' (quoted in Bobbio 1979: 98). The potentially reformist line of 'Let's take the city!' was summarily rejected.

Although the Rimini meeting did not contemplate support for terrorism, it marked a fateful turning point. Politically, it meant that the group would have great difficulty condemning the increasingly violent acts of other groups on the left, like the Red Brigades, or in disciplining its own militants who engaged in violence. Internally, it strengthened the military role of the *servizio d'ordine* (Bobbio 1979: 101) and led to divisions between left and right. Externally, it helped to delay cooperation with other groups on the extreme left for another two years (Bobbio 1979: 99). It was the moment in Lotta Continua's history when it came closest to accepting the hypothesis of armed struggle.

But it was soon no longer possible to straddle such a divisive issue. With each turn in the spiral of organized violence, police repression, and counter-violence, more people were repelled by the course that the struggle was taking. The turning point for Lotta Continua came when the police unearthed the NAP and when two of its own militants were shot in a bank robbery. Lotta Continua, which was finding it more difficult to find 'democratic' lawyers willing to defend its militants when they were arrested,[20] closed down its campaign in the prisons and asked publicly why young men should follow a course that led them to be shot like dogs.

By mid-1974, Lotta Continua had turned definitively away from violence. The formal turning point was the congress of January 1975, at which it was decided that 'the mass line must be rigorously applied to the problem of force. . . . To treat the problem of force as a separate problem means putting the rifle in the command post' (Lotta Continua 1975: 122–3). But the condemnation of violence came too late for some militants. Lacking a coherent political line to give meaning to their needs and concerns and seeing the possibilities of revolution slipping away, they yielded to the attractions of military anti-fascism, violent rhetoric, and support for revolutionary violence, all of which produced a 'culture of force' that was 'difficult to root out, even after there was a change in [Lotta Continua's] political line' (Bobbio 1979: 106). In 1975 a Milanese group, rejecting Lotta Continua's institutional strategy, broke away and formed Comitati Comunisti, a predecessor of Prima Linea.

VII POLITICS, OR THE ART OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

The period of Lotta Continua's history that followed its ambivalent rejection of violence is part of the general history of extraparliamentary party politics and is mainly outside the scope of this inquiry.[21] But a look at its evolution after 1972 will help us to understand more clearly how the decline of mass mobilization and the rise of terrorism influenced the turn to electoral politics of this movement organization.

As the cycle of mass mobilization in which it is born comes to an end, a social movement organization has only two choices: either to follow the route of 'an extremism that—lacking a solid mass foundation—assumes the exasperated character of proletarian expropriations, illegal actions and the exaltation of armed struggle' (Bobbio 1979: 140); or a shift towards institutional politics. Once Lotta Continua's expansion into new areas and new forms of action was blocked by the decline of mass mobilization, the group had to take more seriously the questions it had consistently glossed over in the past: its relations with the traditional labour movement and the PCI; what form the party should take; the group's relations with its competitors; the transition to socialism (Bobbio 1979: 113–20).

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[20] Interview with Bruno Dente, Milan, 21 June 1986.

[21] For a detailed analysis, see Bobbio (1979: pt 3).

At the heart of the change lay the downturn in the cycle. Bobbio interprets the change in the following way: 'In this period, the radical wave that had marked the emergence of new social subjects between 1968 and 1970 appears to have been exhausted. Lotta Continua's about-face is the (delayed) response to a clear reversal of a phase that occurred between 1971 and 1973' (1979: 114).

Was the movement of 1967–9 over? No, Sofri reasoned, it had simply become a 'long wave' whose ground was shifting from society to politics and to the state. Henceforth the 'political' would prevail over the 'social', general demands over specific ones. The process represented 'the system's response to a series of processes that had been triggered by the long wave of 1968 . . . leading to an assault . . . on the heights of politics' (Bobbio 1979: 115).

How were the advanced forces of the Left to respond to this shift of level and focus? It was no longer possible for them to depend on conflict on the shopfloor, on radical actions, on high points of struggle, because mass mobilization was over. Indeed, precisely to give continuity to the cycle that had begun in 1968–9, they had to find a new form that would give weight to the radical thrust of the movement within the political process. 'If it was with politics that the sphere of social struggle was being ground down, a new form of politics had to be invented' (Bobbio 1979: 115).[22]

But who was there to invent a new form of politics? In the context of 1972–5, it was the new advocates of vanguard violence who held the initiative. With their base for mass mobilization lost and with the initiative for radical actions seized by the terrorist Left, what road remained for the *mass* movements of 1969 except that of politics?

Once decided upon in principle, the shift to operating within the system became, in practice, a flight. First, Lotta Continua attempted to correct its disastrous factory policy of 1969 by participating in the councils of factory delegates (Bobbio 1979: 116–20). Next, the group increased its cooperation with the others on the extreme left—the PDUP-Manifesto and Avanguardia Operaia—who had also chosen the route of legalism (Bobbio 1979: 141–4). Third, its conception of the party evolved from that of a coalition of 'internal vanguards' to 'a place in which the individual subordinates himself to the collectivity'—to nothhing less than 'the rediscovery of democratic centralism' (1979: 129).[23]

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[22] I am paraphrasing Bobbio's treatment of the roots of the change in strategy, which he bases mainly on a programmatic discussion published in *Lotta Continua* on 8, 12, and 14 Oct. 1972; and on a report of a meeting of its National Committee on 21 Oct. 1972.

Finally, after almost a decade of fierce anti-communist polemics, the party moved in the direction of the PCI, even before the Chilean coup of September 1973 turned the Communists to their celebrated strategy of the Historic Compromise. Discarding all his previous analyses, Sofri proclaimed in January 1973 that 'revisionism is not destined to disappear' (*Lotta Continua*, 12 Jan. 1973).

According to this analysis, there were only two real choices for Italy: either a fascist choice under the aegis of the bourgeoisie; or a government representing the proletariat, under the management of the PCI. Of the two, only the latter could provide space for 'the permanent reinforcement of revolutionary struggle and organization' (quoted in Bobbio 1979: 126), so Lotta Continua supported the PCI in the 1975 local elections to allow the proletariat to put pressure on the revisionists. Its betrayal of the extreme Left did not go unforgiven.

Sofri was correct in predicting that the harvest planted by the movements of 1968 would be gathered by the PCI. But it was a bitter harvest at best; and, at worst, these elections marked the definitive defeat of 1968. There was no place in that future for Lotta Continua, for once it had built a Leninist internal structure and embraced an electoral route to socialism, it lacked appeal to the new forces that were emerging in Italian society. This became apparent with the failure of both its support for the PCI in 1975 and of its coalition with the two other main groups of the extreme left in 1976. After that, it remained only to find a pretext to give up the ghost.

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[23] The quotation from Sofri is from his speech to a 1973 conference of the Milan group of Lotta Continua; quoted by Bobbio (1979: 129). Though the parallel with the Third International is perhaps excessive, Sofri himself later admitted that 'although I have always been a firm critic of the theses of comrade Lenin . . . about the [party as an] external vanguard, in my whole life, I never succeeded in being the internal vanguard of anything' (1977: 76).

That pretext appeared when a group of women members of Lotta Continua decided to march in a national women's parade in December 1975 (see the concluding chapter). When the march was subjected to physical violence by male Lotta Continua members, the women of Lotta Continua organized themselves as a faction (Bobbio 1979: 163). From then on, women, young people, and workers refused to recognize the authority of the national leadership. Although others tried to preserve the organization in a new form (Bobbio 1979: 182 ff.), Lotta Continua was finished as a revolutionary organization.

It was with the sense of paradox that had characterized his whole career that Sofri ended it, as it became clear that his electoral strategy had been a disaster. He recalled Lotta Continua's birth, when there was a conflict 'opposing revisionists and unionists, on the one hand, to students and the workers on the other . . . It was not primarily a conflict over political line, but a conflict about what politics is about. The conflict [within Lotta Continua] today', he continued, 'is . . . exactly analogous to the one in 1968–9' (Sofri 1977: 77).

CONCLUSIONS

In the space of a few years, Lotta Continua developed from a small radical group into a major national movement organization stimulating mass disuption and challenging the institutional parties and unions. It then transformed itself into a small extremist party that lost its capacity to mobilize a mass base. Was this development the product of an iron law of oligarchy, of avoidable strategic and tactical errors, or of something else?

The thesis of automatic institutionalization does not hold up very well when we consider that other groups that emerged from the same period of mobilization—most notably, Potere Operaio—followed a route into armed struggle, just as Lotta Continua was moving towards the party system. If institutionalization is the inevitable end of social movements, why did it not affect both of these groups equally?

The thesis of inadequate strategic analyses and poor tactical decisions is a little more convincing. Lotta Continua's decision to boycott the factory councils, its inattention to the needs of the students, its abandonment of the line of 'Take the city', and its fruitless attempt to organize the South are clear examples of its tactical errors. But each of these decisions was determined by the group's choice of a movementist strategy. Once it had chosen this strategy, Lotta Continua *had* to try to generalize its 'advanced positions' or it would lose its chance to use the one resource—its capacity for disruption—that could bring it new supporters and challenge the institutional Left.

The rise and fall of movement organizations is determined, not by movement leaders, but by the parabola of mass mobilization within the protest cycle. They take advantage of its rich possibilities for mobilization to diffuse their influence and challenge their opponents. As long as participation continues to grow, new sites become available to the movement and collective action attracts a mass base. But as mobilization declines, movement organizers must seek new sites for protest and new ways to assert their importance.

The end of the cycle produces outbidding and reaction, as each group seeks a share of a shrinking social movement sector. The dialectic between violence and non-violence was symptomatic of this: where Lotta Continua had preached the necessity of violence, the Red Brigades and other terrorist groups on the left dared to practise it; where *Lotta Continua* called for sequestering factory managers, the Brigades kidnapped the personnel manager of Sit-Siemens and photographed him with a sign around his neck (Bobbio 1979: 103); where *Lotta Continua* called the murder of Commissioner Calabresi an act of proletarian justice, the *brigatisti* elevated political murder to an instrument of politics.

In a declining phase of mobilization, the only way for a mass movement to compete with opponents trying to outflank it is by itself adopting violence or by moving in the opposite direction, towards institutionalization. Those in Lotta Continua who believed in violence as a weapon broke away and joined clandestine groups, though in much smaller numbers than is often supposed (see Chapter 12). But for most of its militants, violence had always been a way of talking to the masses and not a central political weapon. They eventually decided to use the term 'force' instead of violence, to detach the problem from its emotional connotations (Lotta Continua 1975). When the Red Brigades and others carried violence to its logical conclusion, there was nothing left for those who refused violence but institutional politics.

Supporting the PCI in the elections of 1975 and running a joint slate with other extreme Left groups in 1976 were the last in the long series of Lotta Continua's mobilization campaigns. But they were mobilization campaigns with a difference. For once the electoral card had been played—and lost—there was no longer a distinguishable difference between Lotta Continua and the rest of the institutional Left. As Sofri said in his swan song in 1976, 'where once there stood Berlinguer, Longo and Amendola [the PCI]—today we find Sofri, Viale and company' (1977: 77). For when the cycles of protest end, the only course for those who reject violence is politics, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Part Four

OUTCOMES

12

VIOLENCE AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION

A Massacre

12 December 1969.[1] Market day for the farmers of the Milan region. The Bank of Agriculture in Piazza Fontana is crowded with people from the provinces who are making deposits, negotiating loans, gossiping under the great rotunda. In a small brown satchel that has been smuggled into the bank, a bomb explodes, killing thirteen people, wounding ninety, and creating chaos. At almost the same moment, three more devices go off in Rome (*Corriere*, 13 Dec.). For the first time since the protest cycle began, there are signs of an organized conspiracy.

But by whom? The next day's headlines, printed in large black letters, announce the death toll to a shocked country (*Corriere*, 13 Dec.). The victims' funeral becomes an occasion for the the political class to flock to Milan to inveigh against violence (Viale 1978: 218). President Giuseppe Saragat talks of the 'bestial lack of conscience' that could lead to such 'a tragic chain of terrorist acts'. He warns that it must be 'broken at any cost' by the 'forces of democratic order' (*Corriere*, 13 Dec.). Saragat's plea combines ritual condolences to the victims with a new note of warning: if the Republic is to survive, it must be vigilant against subversion. A round-up of leftists, especially anarchists, begins immediately.

Deaths in protest events had been rare during the intensive period of mobilization from 1967 to the middle of 1969. But from the autumn of 1969 on, death by violence increasingly accompanied, or was the objective of, conflict. Although organized terrorism reached its height only in the late 1970s, people were being killed and wounded during protests even in the early 1970s. The graph in Figure 12.1 calculates the number of events from *Corriere della Sera* in each semester in which death or wounding was reported in politically related actions. 'The bombs of Piazza Fontana', recalled Adriano Sofri later, 'marked an irreparable break' with the past (1985: 94).

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[1] My thanks to Tom Zamora, whose Cornell senior thesis (1988) helped me in reconstructing the story of Piazza Fontana and the events that followed.

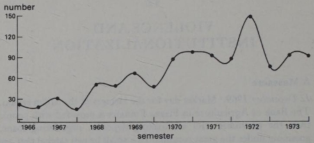

Fig. 12.1 Events in which protesters, police, objects of protest, or third parties were killed or wounded, 1966–73.

The first turning point in the spiral of violence occurred three weeks before the bombing in the Bank of Agriculture when in the course of a national housing strike a policeman was killed at the wheel of a police vehicle (Lumley 1983: 417–18). When the extreme Left responded by calling for 'working-class violence from the factory to the streets' (Bobbio 1979: 52), the Catholic conscience of the nation was shocked. Vindication of policeman Annaruma's death became a rallying cry for the extreme Right (Bobbio 1979: 52).

Who actually committed the massacre of Piazza Fontana would not be discovered for years.[2] The police quickly followed a 'red trail'. On 13 December, they arrested 27 leftists—mostly anarchists—one of whom, Giuseppe Pinelli, was suspected of having been in the vicinity of the bank on the morning in question (*Corriere*, 13 Dec.). Pinelli was hauled off to the Questura for questioning. There, the police later announced, after 'his alibi was broken', Pinelli jumped from a fourth-story window to the courtyard below (*Corriere*, 16 Dec.). When he died in the hospital an hour later, the police—with wonderful alacrity—declared him guilty of bombing the Bank of Agriculture.

[2] By 12 Dec. 1972, the *Corriere* was reporting that the delay of the Valpreda trial might be due to a second line of inquiry—what it called *la pista nera* (the fascist trail). By 1973, uncertainty was growing as it became clear that a friend of Valpreda's was a recent convert to anarchism from fascism, a fact that provided a link to two recently arrested Fascists, Freda and Ventura (*Corriere*, 12 Dec. 1973). By 1974, the *Corriere* was recognizing that there indeed existed a 'strategy of tension' from the far Right, just as the extreme Left had been claiming since 1969; see *Corriere*, 13 Dec. 1974.

Death and mourning soon became contested political terrain for both Left and Right. While the Right claimed that the Piazza Fontana massacre and the Rome bombings were the product of a left-wing plot, the extreme Left saw them as a Fascist provocation and—especially after Pinelli's suspicious death—as evidence of the fascistization of the state. When a second anarchist, Pietro Valpreda, was quickly arrested, the extreme Left began to see itself under general attack (*Corriere*, 17 Dec.).

Repression went well beyond Valpreda's arrest: in Genoa, the police picked up six Maoists; in Milan, five more anarchists were arrested, and the office of the left-wing publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli was searched (*Corriere*, 20 Dec.).[3] The widespread perquisitions of documents and the fear of sudden police sweeps led some leftists to flee. Even if there was no concerted 'strategy of tension' by the extreme Right and the police as the extreme Left claimed, the police were attacking the *entire* extraparliamentary Left, forcing people to choose between legal, peaceful protest and going underground.

The mystery grew as Pinelli was revealed to be someone whom even some of the police regarded as 'incapable of violent actions' (*Corriere*, 17 Dec.). His family legally denounced the questore, who had made the hurried announcement of his guilt after his death, for defaming his character and the reputation of his family (*Corriere*, 28 Dec.). The police—with their case against Pinelli's ghost rapidly dissolving and a new suspect in hand—began to focus on Valpreda's movements on the day of the massacre (*Corriere*, 17 Dec.). But Valpreda insisted on his innocence, and his aunt—with whom he lived at the time—swore he was asleep in bed at the moment of the bombing (*Corriere* 18 Dec.).

The Piazza Fontana massacre was a serious blow to the extreme Left. But like many political disasters, it also provided it with opportunities for unity and for propaganda outside its usual constituency.[4] At first stunned into silence by the bombing, the extraparliamentary groups responded to both Pinelli's 'jump' and their suspicion that Valpreda was being framed by using to the full their two major resources—publication and mobilization.

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[3] Feltrinelli in the meantime left for Switzerland. He was to die under mysterious circumstances in an explosion under an electricity pylon in 1972.

[4] For Lotta Continua, for example, 'it was an integral part of its shift towards a new form of politics . . . which begins at the base . . . and finds its natural extension in denouncing the misdeeds of the elite' (Bobbio 1979: 56).

Propaganda efforts were orchestrated by *Lotta Continua* and were spurred by the publication of a remarkably successful book, *Strage di stato* (Anon. 1970), published by a group of people who had been investigating the extreme Right since 1966 (Viale 1978: 221).[5] *Lotta Continua* used inflammatory headlines and denunciations of police complicity. These tactics provided the authorities with a pretext for summoning the 'responsible' editor, Pio Baldelli, before a magistrate (Bobbio 1979: 55). This in turn fired more suspicion among the Left: if the police were not accomplices to the bombing, why were they so anxious to stifle criticism? Even the normally cautious PCI began to wonder if there was a plot linking the security services to the far Right. Such a conspiracy had been uncovered as recently as 1964, in a plot involving the head of the military secret service, General De Lorenzo.

The Left's mobilization campaign began on a more sombre note at Pinelli's funeral, which was the occasion for a massive demonstration (*Corriere*, 21 Dec.). The red flags of the Marxist Left and the red and black ones of the anarchists mingled as three thousand militants of the extraparliamentary Left closed ranks behind Pinelli's coffin (Viale 1978: 218). From then on, writes Bobbio, 'not a single demonstration fails to be dominated by slogans recalling Pinelli's death and by the singing of "the ballad of Pinelli" dedicated to him' (1979: 55; Viale 1978: 217).

Disaster came a year later. On the first anniversary of the masscre of Piazza Fontana, three separate demonstrations were held in Milan, one by the Communist-led ANPI against the Burgos trial, another by the anarchists to proclaim their innocence of the bombing, and a third by the Movimento studentesco to combat what it saw as fascist provocation. A neo-fascist demonstration was cancelled after the police forbade it, but young Fascists congregated in Piazza San Babila, not far from the site of the other demonstrations (*Corriere* 13 Dec. 1970).

The ANPI march went off smoothly (most of the marchers were veterans of the Resistance, and the PCI provided a disciplined *servizio d'ordine*), but extreme Left and Right clashed in several places. As the police waded in to break up the violence, a tear-gas cannister, fired at close range, killed a left-wing student, Saltarelli.

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[5] *Strage di stato* presented a wealth of circumstantial evidence of state collusion with the extreme Right that went back to the early 1960s. It did not, however, prove the existence of a Fascist–police link in the Piazza Fontana case.

Fifty-six others were wounded in the melée (*Corriere* 14 Dec. 1970). There was another funeral, a new investigation and another martyrdom to add to that of Pinelli. The police at first claimed that Saltarelli died of a heart attack, but medical examiners eventually proved them responsible for his death (*Corriere* 15 Dec. 1970). The bomb of Piazza Fontana seemed to have created a widening spiral of violence. What was its source?

I FROM *IL SESSANTOTTO* TO TERRORISM?

The increase in violence that began in the winter of 1969 suggested to some observers that there was a causal link between the mass mobilizations of 1967–8 and the organized terrorism of the mid-to-late 1970s. Joseph LaPalombara produces a representative analysis in his book *Democracy, Italian Style*:

> In its earliest phases, terrorism appeared as little more than an extension of the protest movements and the hundreds of more or less revolutionary groups that mushroomed in the universities in the late 1960s. Initially, these groups talked and talked. Some then turned to kidnapping and kneecapping. Murder came later. (1987: 169–70)[6]

LaPalombara's interpretation should not be confused with the ideological attacks against the Left that followed the outbreak of terrorism. It deserves respect if only because it comes from one of Italy's major foreign interpreters. However, is it fair for him to draw a straight red line from the university protests of 1967–8 to the political murders a decade later? From the joyous outpourings of *il sessantotto* to the brutality of the Moro assassination? It is clearly true that, as the preceding chapters have shown, violence was a product of the protest cycle. But I have argued that it was a result of the *decline* of mobilization; if so, can the responsibility for the 'years of lead' be traced to the 'moment of madness' a decade earlier?

If we take the massacre at Piazza Fontana as an archetype of political violence and of its effects, it will reveal that the terrorism of the 1970s had a complex lineage. The incident will show that violence was never a monopoly of the extreme Left—indeed, it developed through an interactive process among the forces of order, politicians, and the press, as well as between leftists and rightists. Terrorism was a product of new groups which emerged in the mid-1970s to the left of those that came out of the crisis of the student movement at the height of working class mobilization. The data will show that violence had a double function in the cycle of protest: in addition to producing kidnappings, kneecappings, and political murder, it contributed to the process of institutionalization that brought the cycle to a close.

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[6] He goes on to argue that terrorism 'reached its high point in part because the terrorists could count on a certain amount of understanding and indeed collusion' on the part of segments of the public (1987: 169), the parties of the institutional Left, a 'fair chunk of the Italian intellectual establishment' (1987: 174), and the press (1987: 186–9). He is particularly harsh towards the Communist party up to the time of the Moro case (1987: 174–6). LaPalombara's interpretation is more balanced than many of the more ideological attacks on the extreme Left. I use it as an example because it comes from one of the most sensitive observers of the Italian scene.

Before looking at these findings, however, we shall trace the magnitude and forms of violence from the newspaper record, then examine the complicated issue of what factors caused Italy to have so more much organized violence than other countries, and finally describe the patterns of institutionalization that accompanied, and to some extent, responded to it. I shall return to Piazza Fontana at the end of the chapter to show how violence and institutionalization, between them, brought the cycle to a close.

Violence and Political Violence

LaPalombara is correct in stating that political murder was the last phase in a sequence of violence in Italy. It is useful to recall two things about the 1970s, however. First, most of the violence that the decade brought to Italy was apolitical. Reported crimes against persons increased from 128,000 cases in 1970 to 216,000 in 1978,[7] an increase of 69 per cent, no more than in other western countries. LaPalombara blames terrorism for emptying the streets of Italian cities at night; but the proportion of political violence was infinitely smaller than the *non*-political violence that swept its major cities.

This increase in crime was not limited to Italy. In these years violence increased in every industrial country in the world. Criminal violence was emptying the streets even in places in which there was little or no political extremism—in the United States, for example, or in England and Wales.[8] There was certainly an increase in ordinary violence in the three largest Italian cities, Milan, Turin, and Rome, which also happen to have been the centres of organized terrorism (della Porta 1987: 324). Figure 12.2, based on data from trial records from the Milan Court of Appeals, allows us to compare the rise of ordinary criminality with that of political violence in Milan.[9]

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[7] The data are reported in ISTAT, *Annuario statistico italiano* (1975: 165, 1979: 123).

[8] Two examples: in England and Wales, 'serious offences' increased from 1.7 million in 1971 to 2.7 million in 1981, an increase of 60%, and close to the increase that took place in Italy. (From *Social Trends* [1981: 205].) In the US, violent crime increased by an equal percentage between 1970 and 1980. (From US Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States* [1979: 37].)

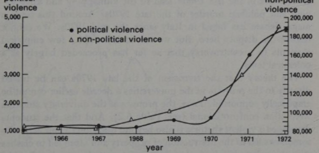

FIG. 12.2 Trials for political and non-political violence in Milan, 1962–72.

From the two curves in Figure 12.2, we can see that trials for ordinary criminal acts were increasing at almost precisely the same rate as trials for assaulting public officials, the charge that the police usually brought against demonstrators. The capital of political violence was also the centre of the increase in other violent crimes.

What portion of this new violence involved political murder? It is important to keep in mind that murder was never more than a small part of the actions of the clandestine groups, even at the height of organized terrorism in the late 1970s. Donatella della Porta was able to record 1,159 acts undertaken by clandestine organizations between 1970 and 1983. She found that 142 of these acts, just over 12 per cent, resulted in fatalities, of which twenty-six were terrorists.[10] Moreover, the indiscriminate mass murder of civilians was never a goal of left-wing terrorism; from even before Piazza Fontana, it was the speciality of the extreme Right (Viale 1978: 219).

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[9] I should like to thank Rossella Ronchi for collecting these data from the Ministry of Justice in Milan. The documents are called 'Discorso per l'inaugurazione dell'anno giudiziario'.

[10] Della Porta's data are reported in her 'Organizzazioni politiche clandestine', Ph.D. Thesis, European University Institute (1987: 344–5). I am grateful to her for permission to cite these unpublished data.

University and High School Violence

Who committed acts of political violence? Or, to put LaPalombara's assertion as a question, to what extent did 'the protest movements and . . . more or less revolutionary groups that mushroomed in the universities in the late 1960s' lead to the kidnapping and kneecapping and political murder of the late 1970s? Around this issue a major debate has raged in Italy since the mid 1970s. We cannot resolve the dispute here. But we can at least add a few empirical elements to a controversy that so far has proceeded largely at a polemical level.

The theory that the terrorism of the late 1970s can be traced directly to the protests in the universities a decade earlier cannot be empirically supported. True, the protests of the university students were often confrontational (see Table 6.2). And that the students developed a violent rhetoric is also beyond question. Their activities sometimes led to the destruction of property and often led to clashes with the police, incidents that the press reported with glee. But the main forms of action that the students used were the occupation, which was notably non-violent, and the public march, the classical form of political mobilization in democracies. Even using a decidedly conservative newspaper source like the *Corriere* we almost never found the university students to be engaged in direct attacks on others.[11]

Violence was far more common after the decline of the university students' movement and among secondary school students who were politicized in the early 1970s. Many of these younger students were recruited by the left-wing extraparliamenatary groups that were formed following the collapse of the university movement. But others were Fascists and still others were simply roving bands of youth with vaguely political labels. Whoever they were, this generation of protesters was totally different from that of 1968. Figure 12.3 traces the proportion of conflicts involving young people in which violence occurred for each semester from 1966 to 1973. The figure shows that violence among young people peaked when *il sessantotto* was little more than a memory.

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[11] The forms of action and their incidence in university students' protests from 1967 to 1969 were: routine forms 4.3%; assemblies 28.8%; marches and public meetings 16.5%; confrontational forms 45.3%; violence of various kinds 20.2%. The high school students used assemblies just as often (30%); routine forms, and marches and public meetings more often (21.8% and 47.4% respectively); and confrontations and violence more often too (49.6% and 21.8% respectively).

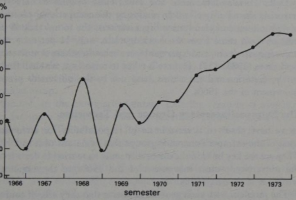

Fig. 12.3 Percentage of youth protests involving violence, 1966–73.

Little of this violence occurred in the schools themselves and almost none of it was related to the issue of authority which the university students had put on the agenda. For the most part, it was street violence. In so far as it reflected a larger conflict, it was the result of the polarization of national politics between Left and Right in the early 1970s. This upsurge in political conflict coincided with, and drew upon, the simultaneous growth of teenage delinquency which was increasing in every country in the West.

An old Italian proverb holds that 'it is a bad teacher who sends his students out to fight'. Some have argued that university students would scarcely have turned violent were it not for the journalists who reported on terrorists and the professors who egged them on (LaPalombara 1987: 177). This proposition may be arguable for the press's treatment of violence (see Roncarolo 1985; Schlesinger 1981), although the matter is immensely more complicated. But except for a few well-known cases, it is difficult to support empirically the thesis that academicians, 'sent' their students out to do violence. For most of the recruits to the clandestine organizations of the 1970s did not come from the universities, but came directly out of high school and were in any case too poor and too young at the time of their arrest to have been to university (della Porta 1987: 346).

Della Porta's data make the lower-class origins of left-wing terrorists abundantly clear. In analysing the occupational positions of 450 militants of clandestine organizations, she found that 43 per cent of them came from the working class, only 11 per cent were university students, and 6 per cent were schoolteachers or university professors (1987: 337). If there is a key to terrorism, we shall find it in the factories and the slums, and not in the university protest movement of the 1960s.

The Extraparliamentary Groups and Terrorism

If we have absolved *il sessantotto* of responsibility for terrorism, what of the extraparliamentary groups that came out of it in 1969? They are the key links in the chain that some have tried to draw from the university protest movement of the 1960s to the organized terrorism of the late 1970s.

The problem with such generalizations is that they are, of course, both true and false. All of these groups celebrated violence in words and many accepted it in action. Some future terrorists *did* come from these organizations, just as others came from the PCI, the unions or even from Catholic backgrounds.[12] But in assessing what the responsibility of these groups was for terrorism, we must keep three things in mind.

First, *hundreds* of new Left groups emerged from the wreckage of the university students' movement in 1968–9 and were operating in Italy in the early 1970s; relatively few of their number ended up in the armed struggle. The one that is cited most often—Potere Operaio/Autonomia Operaia—was not typical. Its theoreticians had bet so exclusively on the factory that when worker mobilization declined the organization rapidly collapsed. Some of its most determined militants were left with little else but violence as a weapon and converged in what came to be called the 'area of autonomy' in 1975–6.

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[12] Remarkably few, however, came from the PCI or the unions: della Porta reports that of the 814 cases she studied, only 17 had ever been communists and 40 came from the unions (1987: 341). She has not found evidence about the number of terrorists who had ties with Catholic organizations, although a few well-known leaders, Renato Curcio, for example, did have such ties.

Many of these groups were never much more than a small group around a journal. Others, like Lotta Continua, although using violence in the streets, moved steadily towards the party system from 1972 on, as we saw in Chapter 11. An analysis of the hundreds of groups archived in the Feltrinelli and Gramsci institutes turns up only a handful which also appear in della Porta's list of 35 major left-wing terrorist organizations. Those who opted for terrorism were a tiny minority of the extraparliamentary Left; they usually defected in twos and threes from the group in which they originated in order to take up arms. In Lotta Continua, for example, only one section, that of Sesto San Giovanni, ever moved as a group into the terrorist camp.

Second, in the extraparliamentary Left the rhetoric of violence was far more widespread than its practice. Consider Lotta Continua's line of 'Take the city!' It had a ferociously violent rhetoric; as Bobbio remembers, 'the masses would have to learn to publicly try and punish their own jailers, to organize militarily . . . because the armed struggle begins with the defence of a tenant threatened with eviction and ends with a popular struggle against imperialism' (Bobbio 1979: 79). At one stage, leaders of Lotta Continua talked about setting up 'red bases' in the cities, and were impressed with the 'Northern Irish' model.

Terrifying words. But in reality, Lotta Continua's practice in the urban movements of the early 1970s was as radically pragmatic as that of its competitors. Violence occurred in the course of occupations of buildings when the police came to roust the occupiers. And it had to be this way; low-paid or unemployed public housing tenants living on the periphery of Milan or Turin were not interested in establishing *base rossi* or in learning the tactics of the IRA, but in lower rents and decent services. Political agitators such as Sofri used whatever symbols of international struggle—China, Vietnam, Chile, Ulster, Portugal—came to hand to gain attention and support, not to provide models for action.

Much of the violent rhetoric of the extraparliamentary groups was part of the competitive political struggle within the social movement sector that we saw in Chapter 9 and 10. For example, when Lotta Continua adopted its line of 'general struggle' in 1971, it was a competitive reaction to Potere Operaio's call for an insurrection. Even after the group set out on a course that would end with electoral competition and the condemnation of violence, its leaders would describe the Red Brigades only as 'comrades who err', in order to retain their revolutionary credentials.

Finally, as we have seen again and again, a large part of the violence of the extraparliamentary groups occurred *within* the social movement sector: one group would attack another along a line of march; or one such group would attack the headquarters of another. Almost all the violent conflicts we found in the newspaper data up until 1973, and most of the attacks on property, were of this 'internal' type. Such exchanges played an important role in socializing militants into the use of violence as a political weapon. But they affected relatively few members of the public, and they were not acts of terror against the state. Indeed, their savagery frightened many who had joined the movements in the ebullient days of 1967–9 into leaving political life. For many, violence was the cause of demobilization.[13]

Fewer than one-quarter of the 814 terrorists that della Porta identified from judicial records were people who *at any time* had been members of any of the major new Left groups. Of these, 52 had been in Potere Operaio and 75 in Lotta Continua (della Porta 1987: 341). A much larger group, two-thirds of the total, came not from the extraparliamentary organizations, but from a new generation of small, semi-clandestine groups that della Porta categorizes under the general rubric 'autonomous collectives'. Terrorism was not the child of 1968; it was not even its grandchild; it was the fruit of a new generation of extremists who found the extraparliamentary groups too moderate for their tastes.

One argument for holding the new Left responsible for terrorism is similar to that which holds the PCI responsible for the existence of the extraparlimentary groups themselves. To the extent that the reformist PCI had 'betrayed' the working class, this argument runs, it allowed these new groups to develop to its left. By the same logic, Lotta Continua, Avanguardia Operaia, and the Manifesto could be blamed for terrorism because they lost people to their left as they themselves shifted from disruption to institutional politics.

But it strains logic to see the extraparliamentary groups as responsible for terrorism because they turned away from it, just as it strains logic to hold the PCI responsible for the political opponents who tried to outflank it to its left. We shall see below that there is one important sense in which the extraparliamentary Left *does* share in the blame for terrorism. But before dealing with it we must turn more explicitly to the problem of the generations within the protest cycle.

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[13] An unexplored aspect of the violent phase was its negative effect on the large number of young women who had been part of the earlier movements. Although the press quickly fastened on the (relatively few) women who joined in clandestine groups, and feminist writers have pointed to the rampant sexism of the new Left as the primary reason for their departure, all the women interviewed in this study cited the violence of the early 1970s as an important reason for their revulsion against politics.

The Phases of Violence

In a period of rapid and intense mobilization, political generations succeed one another very rapidly. This is not just a matter of ideology, though it is obvious that such periods produce ideological factionalizaton and radicalization too. Generational competition within protest cycles also takes the more concrete form of tactical innovation.

Part of this tactical innovation is a response to the moves of the authorities in responding to earlier forms of protest (McAdam 1983). For example, as we saw in Chapter 10, it was only after the authorities showed themselves determined to break up the student movements' occupations that street confrontations like the Bussola took place.

But another reason for tactical innovation is the tactical outbidding that takes place within the social movement sector. For just as the organizers of 1967–8 outflanked the old student associations with the use of the occupation, and the extraparliamentary groups of 1969 challenged the unions and the PCI with radical industrial action, the extremists of the mid 1970s sought to establish their own political space with still more radical forms of action—industrial sabotage, symbolic kidnappings, proletarian expropriation, and finally terrorism.

During the intensive peak of the cycle, from 1967 to 1969, as we saw in Chapter 6, violence occurred most often in the context of large peaceful or confrontational gatherings: in clashes with police who were barring demonstrators' way or charging them; when small groups tried to radicalize their competitors' march or demonstration; and when an opposing band tried to break up a peaceful mass meeting.

From 1969 on, intergroup violence was much more likely to involve small groups of people attacking one another's headquarters or fighting on the street. This was partly because the fascist groups, who were responsible for most of the attacks against the extreme Left, were never a mass movement and preferred to travel in small bands. But there was also a more structural reason: as mobilization declined, small group activities were the only kind possible for most of the new groups trying to establish themselves on the Left, because they simply did not have the personnel for mass collective action. Organized violence was the product of demobilization.

In the final stages of the cycle, there was an increase in the deliberate use of violence against others. But this increase was a function of the *decline* of mass protest, not of its extension. Indeed, deliberate directed violence did not become common until 1972–3, *when all the other forms of collective action had declined*. It was during this period of competitive small-group violence, as the organizations of the extraparliamentary Left were moving into the political system, that organized terrorism arose.

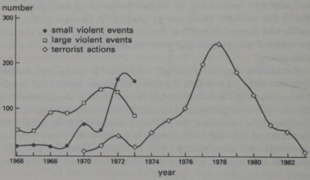

FIG. 12.4 Large violent events and small group violence, 1966–73, and terrorist actions, 1970–83. Figures of terrorist actions from della Porta (1987).

Figure 12.4 illustrates these three phases in the use of violence. It combines two kinds of data: the newspaper information collected from 1966–73 provides figures both for violence that arose in the context of large-group demonstrations and for small-group violence; and della Porta's study of left-wing terrorism provides data on the number of terrorist actions from 1970 to 1983.

If we compare first the data on large-group and small-group violence before 1974, we shall find confirmation that, at the intensive peak of the cycle, the greatest number of incidents of violence took place in the context of large demonstrations, while only a few came from small-group violent events. By 1973—the last year in our series—violence in large events had declined almost to the level of 1966, but small-group violence had increased to over one-third of the total. Comparing this second curve to that which represents the terrorist actions recorded by della Porta, we can see that the beginning of organized terrorism coincided with the definitive decline of mass violence and with the period in which small-group violence peaked.

By the end of the protest cycle, when most people were no longer engaging in mass collective action, of those left in the social movement sector, a large proportion were meeting in small groups and using violent means to advance their claims. Organized violence was not a property of *il sessantotto;* it was a product of the end of mobilization.

II THE SOURCES OF VIOLENCE

There was violence in the later stages of the American movements of the 1960s and, to a lesser extent, after the French *soixante-huit*. Why was violence so much more prominent a feature of the protest cycle in Italy? LaPalombara is justified in throwing up his hands at the cacophony of competing sociological, psychological, cultural, and economic explanations that have been suggested (1987: 182–4). Only by trying to go back into the political climate of the time will we be able to understand why Italy produced so much more violence than other Western countries. Three factors appear most relevant.

Politics as War

Can it be an accident that the three European countries in which terrorism was most highly developed in the 1970s, West Germany, Spain, and Italy, were all fascist for many years? Spain is rather a special case, but West Germany, like Italy, had a tradition of right-wing violence which persisted into the 1960s.[14] To draw this parallel is not to make the absurd claim that terrorism came only from the Right; it is, rather, to point out that, in Italy, an organized counter-movement to the major movements on the Left was already on the scene in the mid-1960s.

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[14] From a preliminary analysis of West German data from 1963 to 1983, Carl Lankowski reports finding a number of incidents of right-wing violence even in these years. I am grateful to Lankowski for this information. (Verbal communication to the author.)

The tendency of extremist groups to 'learn from the enemy' has always been strong. In Italy, the lessons were on the streets. We have seen how the actions of the extreme Right exacerbated conflict from the time of the death of Paolo Rossi in Rome in 1966 to the school occupations in 1967–8 to the battles in Milan after Piazza Fontana; we even found a hint of neo-Fascism in the opposition to as unpolitical a movement as that in the Isolotto. The presence of a militant and militarized extreme Right—not to mention the tolerance that the police seemed to exercise towards it—was a crucial factor in socializing a generation of young people into the idea that politics was a form of violence.

There was certainly an element of political opportunism in the extreme Left's use of anti-fascism to build support and demonstrate its own prowess. But if we draw a line straight from the university protest movements of 1967–8 to the organized terrorism of the late 1970s, it must pass through the intense period of conflict between extreme Left and extreme Right, when most of the future terrorists were being socialized into politics. If we ignore this crucial phase, we are in danger of overlooking the major formative experience of left-wing Italian terrorism.

The Costs of Violent Rhetoric

I said earlier that the extraparliamentary Left could not escape all responsibility for terrorism. This assertion is premissed on the argument that has been made above about political generations. Each new political generation that comes of age within a cycle gains its political formation at the hands of the one that came before. Of the hundreds of thousands of high school students who became active politically in the early 1970s, relatively few became terrorists. But all were exposed to a political rhetoric that glorified violence and assured the students that their own concerns mattered little alongside the class struggle in the factory.

The problem for the extraparliamentary groups was that once worker mobilization declined, there was little real possibility of employing the energies of these young people in a serious project of industrial conflict. Many were instead inducted into increasingly militaristic *servizi d'ordine* where the closest they came to the class struggle was in mounting hand-to-hand conflict with opposing groups.

In the absence of a serious revolutionary project that transcended workerism and could capture the imagination of their young recruits, the extraparliamentary groups left them with a rejection of reformism, with the tools of violence, but with little else. It was not the teachings of the new Left that produced a terrorist generation; it was the absence of a serious project with which to inspire the next generation once the militance of the workers had subsided.

The Reflux of Workerism and Autonomy

Violence against others was, finally, an expression of the competition *within* the Left for the support of the workers. It was in the factory that the campaign of the extraparliamentary Left for working-class support began and where its revolutionary hopes had their epicentre. Its leaders used the slogan of 'working-class autonomy'—autonomy from the *padrone*, the unions, and the Communist Party—and the tactics of confrontation to establish space for themselves alongside the unions and the PCI.

The earliest and most frequent targets of clandestine activity were factory managers and employees (della Porta 1987: 347).[15] For the one form of collective action that did not require a mass base and could impress the workers was violence. The largest number of attacks was always in the factories. By 1974, there were a number of collectives, committees of struggle, and factory vanguards united only by opposition to the institutional Left and by a rejection of the 'leap into politics' that groups like Lotta Continua were currently taking.

The one constant in the years 1966–73 had been the attempt by the various formations of the new Left to convince the workers that the PCI had deserted them and that the unions were in league with management. Ferocious rhetoric, expressive slogans, and extreme ideological appeals were some of the tactics available to them. But workers are more impressed with deeds than words, or so these groups supposed. In the end, the only resource that the extraparliamentary groups had to outflank the official Left and impress the workers with their prowess was their power to disrupt.

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[15] Della Porta calculates that, in 40% of the cases of Red Brigade actions, the objective was 'propaganda in the factory'. This was true in 27% of the cases of left-wing terrorist actions as a whole (1987: 334).

But this was was a fruitful mass strategy only as long as mobilization was increasing and the unions were on the defensive. After the union successes of the Hot Autumn and the successful institutionalization of the councils of delegates, worker mobilization declined. It was at just this time that the number and variety of extraparliamentary groups trying to appeal to the workers increased. More and more groups were competing for the support of fewer workers, who were less enthusiastic about following their lead.

The effect of the workers' demobilization was devastating, especially for groups that had built their appeals around the hypothesis of continued factory militance. Some, like Potere Operaio, had collapsed by 1973; others became essentially publicists for the extreme Left; a larger number of individuals than is usually admitted ended up in the ranks of the PCI (Lange, Tarrow, and Irvin 1988); while others—such as Lotta Continua—leapt from the factories to successive sectors of Italian society in an attempt to find new 'internal vanguards' that would keep the struggle alive.

What links the extraparliamentary groups to the terrorists a decade later is that both tried to attract the support of the workers by outbidding those who arrived earlier for worker support. What separates them is that the extraparliamentary groups used mass mobilization to outflank the unions and the PCI, while the terrorists used violence to outbid the extraparliamentary groups. In Bobbio's words, 'the prospect of a mass revolt was increasingly distant, while acts of rupture, proletarian expropriations, illegal actions, accompanied by a verbose exhortation of armed struggle, leapt to centre-stage' (Bobbio 1979: 140).

III INSTITUTIONALIZATION

In his essay on *The Politics of Disorder*, Theodore Lowi observes:

> When movements act on the government or any of its parts, there tends to be action with very little interaction—that is, very little bargaining. But this is not violence . . . The effect of the movement is of another sort altogether: *The demands and activities of a movement tend to activate the mechanisms of formal decision-making*. (Lowi 1971: 54)

Critics of Italian politics have stressed how poorly institutionalized it is. Giuseppe Di Palma, for example, notes that the Italian Parliament has not gained the degree of legitimacy that his colleague, Nelson Polsby, found in the American Congress (1977: 187; cf. Polsby 1968). But the institutions of one country will seldom function like those of another. If we are to understand the institutionalization of protest, we shall have to do so in terms of Italy's political culture, which is informal, conflictual, and uses the language of drama even to describe a political game.

Political scientists usually see institutionalization in greater organization and routinization, in the shift from confrontation to bargaining, and in a greater specialization of function. Using these criteria, we find a number of ways in which the protest movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s activated mechanisms of formal decision-making and brought about an institutionalization of protest.

Earlier chapters have already shown how, in the course of the cycle, Italy developed a broader repertoire of participation than it possessed when the cycle began. We saw in Chapter 7 that if strikers were more likely to use violence by its end, they were also more likely to organize marches and public meetings, to use assemblies to plan their demands, and to form grassroots bodies. In a number of other sectors, new institutions and practices developed, reversing the disruptiveness of the early phase of the cycle but also providing social actors with resources to advance their goals. Institutional expansion of participation accompanied violence as mobilization declined.

In industrial relations, new institutions were developed and new roles were imposed on old ones; in the cities, militant urban movements turned towards the politics of planning and municipal politics; in the professions, professional roles were scrutinized and authorities challenged; among the social movement organizations, some became more specialized in representing particular social groups or policy publics, while others turned into community organizations. Let us briefly survey one or two examples of each of these processes before turning to the complex relationship between institutionalization and violence.

Industrial Conflict: Old Institutions, New Practices

The most dramatic institutional innovations of the cycle, the factory councils and the workers' assemblies, have been definitively analysed by Regalia (1979, 1985) and others. What needs to be stressed here is that the factory council was not an invention of the 'wild' period of industrial conflict, but was an expression of its institutionalization. Councils were first discussed within the trade unions as a remedy for their defeats in the 1950s; the first councils emerged spontaneously in the industrial conflicts of the early 1960s; they then reappear in debates within the unions in the mid-1960s; in different form, they appear as committees of agitation in a few key factories in 1968–9; thereafter, they are rapidly adopted as the unions' grassroots institutions.

Like the cycle itself, the councils first developed within institutions; they flourished spontaneously during the intensive peak of mobilization; and under the aegis of the unions, they became the tools for organizing the great expansion of industrial protest that followed. Critics have shown that mass participation in the councils gave way to union hegemony (Regalia 1985). But it cannot be denied that, through them, a generation of factory militants gained experience of the rough-and-tumble of grassroots democracy.

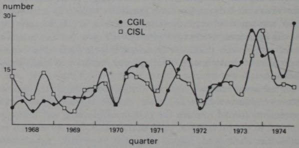

Fig. 12.5 Public events organized by Milan trade union federations, 1968–74.

The councils were not the only institutional development in industrial relations that came out of the cycle of protests. As industrial conflict settled to the factory level, the union federations and confederations increased their degree of public and political activity around economic and other issues. In the long run, this activity led them to become involved in semi-corporative arrangements in both local government and parastate agencies (Regini

1980: 59; Regalia 1987). But in the short run, it produced a much broader public presence for the unions.

In order to chart the levels of public activity of the major union confederations, we analysed the press releases of both the CISL's provincial federation and of the CGIL's Camera di Lavoro in Milan. We looked at the number of public, non-strike events organized by each of these provincial organizations from 1968 on. These data, for each of the two organizations, are represented in Figure 12.5. The graph shows a notable increase in public activity for both major confederations. There was also an increase in the number of *jointly*-sponsored public events (which the graph does not record), reflecting the growing unity among the unions in this period.

Another element in the institutionalization of industrial conflict was increasing recourse to the courts. The Statuto dei Lavoratori made it easier for workers to appeal to the courts to resolve complaints in the workplace. But even before the passage of the Statuto, there was a gradual but almost constant increase in the use of the courts to resolve industrial disputes, particularly on the part of the workers, who quickly perceived that the courts were deciding more and more often in their favour.

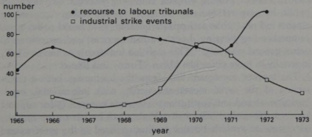

Fig. 12.6 Workers' recourse to the courts, 1965–72, and industrial strike events, 1966–73, in Milan.

Conservatives accused progressive jurists of a bias towards the working class and saw the workers' ability to use the courts to overturn managerial authority as part of the disorder of the period. But workers who could use the courts effectively to gain satisfaction for their demands were choosing legal means *instead of* more disruptive forms of collective action. Although the use of the courts to resolve shopfloor disputes increased more slowly than did the upsurge of industrial conflict, it continued to rise after the latter declined.

Figure 12.6 presents the data we have extracted on labour conflicts from 1965 to 1972 from the data of the Milan Court of Appeals,[16] alongside our own data on industrial strikes in the province of Milan from 1966 through 1973. It allows us to see that strike activity increased before legal action, but that the latter began to increase just as the industrial strikes covered by the newspaper began to decline.[17]

Internally in the role of the councils, politically through the growing public role of the union federations and confederations, and judicially in their growing ability to use the courts, workers' access to institutional resources was increased by the events of the period we have studied. The greater access to the polity that this accorded them was one of the major acquisitions of the cycle of protest.

Urban Protest from Neighbourhood to City Hall

Just as the unions were successfully institutionalizing industrial conflict, urban protest evolved from a grassroots movement of public housing residents to an urban policy lobby representing tenants in both public and private housing, with broad policy goals comprehending housing, health, urban services, and opposition to urban general planning.[18] This shift led inexorably to the city hall, especially in large cities like Milan, Turin, and Rome.

The tenants' movement had, from the beginning, been a cross-section of the social movement sector, with institutional, semi-institutional and anti-institutional elements competing for support within it (Daniele 1978). It would thus not be fair to say that the movement as a whole became institutionalized as the cycle wound down; like industrial protest, at least a part of it had been institutional from the start. As early as 1969, for example, the unions were demanding housing reform. Tenants were being organized by party-led tenants' associations from the early 1960s. The rise of mobilization expanded the number of new groups trying to represent tenants, gave new life to the traditional tenants' associations, and expanded their foci to new issues.

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[16] These data, like the information on violence contained in Fig. 12.2, come from annual publications of the Court of Appeals and were provided by the Ministry of Justice in Milan.

[17] Unfortunately the two curves cover slightly different periods, as the appropriate judicial records were not available for the period after 1972.

[18] This section has no pretence of synthesizing the vast and multifaceted literature on urban movements, but draws from a number of different sources: Alemanni *et al.* (1974), Boffi *et al.* (1972), Daniele (1978), Daolio (ed.) (1974), Maglieri (1979), Perlmutter (1987*a*, *b*), Sbragia (1974), and Seidelman (1979, 1981, 1984).

The trajectory of the urban movements can be written as their move from confrontation to institutionalization. The early stages of the movement were dominated by confrontational protests based on rent strikes and the *autoriduzione* of rents and rates. Organized occupations came after those of the student movement, as urban groups expanded their prospective constituency from public housing tenants to the homeless. In Turin, however, this shift occurred more slowly and was more conflictual (Perlmutter 1988).

Occupations and refusals to pay increased public transportation and utility costs continued into 1975, but as mobilization declined, such initiatives became more difficult to mount. The shift towards established channels of power is most fully documented for the case of Milan.[19] In the capital of Italian protest, 'the struggle for housing exploded in the poor neighbourhoods of the periphery in the years of student protest, continuing during the Hot Autumn' (Daolio 1974: 35). This period, which was marked by popular protest against rent increases in public housing projects, closed with the celebrated episode of Viale Tibaldi in June 1971. In this conflict, in which a number of organized groups participated, forty families that had been waiting for apartments for years occupied apartments in an uninhabited new public housing project. When the occupiers were flushed out by the police, architecture students helped them to move into the University, where they gained enough publicity to force the authorities to give them apartments (Daolio 1974: 49–50).

The major forms of action used in this period were the rent strike and the 'self-reduction' of rentals, which were used most extensively in outlying public housing projects inhabited by the working class and the urban poor. The spread of the tactic was often spontaneous. Certainly, the fact that non-payment of rent increased from 9.7 per cent in 1968 to 21 per cent in 1971 cannot have been wholly the result of organizing efforts (Daolio 1974: 51). In fact, the major organization active in this period, the Unione Inquilini (tenant's union), was active only at the neighbourhood level (Maglieri 1979: 101).

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[19] Ted Perlmutter informs me that the shift towards institutional politics was much slower and less obvious in Turin, where the unions themselves were more combative and the extraparliamentary groups more powerful. See Alemanni *et al.* (1974) for evidence of the former point and Perlmutter (1988) for evidence of the latter.

From 1972 on, the rent strike and *autoriduzione* were joined by more frequent use of the occupation, which had to be organized and usually crossed neighbourhood lines; by a shift from peripheral neighbourhoods to the urban core and from the lower classes to middle-class families living in private housing; and in the movement's expansion from housing issues to those concerning schools, transportation, green space, and urban services (Daolio 1974: 52–3). As the movement's goals broadened, it had to develop a more elaborate organization. Organization was also a function of competition. The Unione Inquilini (within which Avanguardia Operaia constituted a powerful faction), the factory councils, the trade unions, and the SUNIA all sought support from within the same constituency. Like the protest cycle in general, urban protest was diffused by organizational competition.

It was the nature of urban problems that made the move into politics inevitable. But only so many public housing projects could be occupied before authorities learned how to respond to the tactic. For example, they moved to allocate housing to people on a list of the needy, rather than allowing the more aggressive occupiers to take what they wanted. This gave the more organized tenants' groups leverage over the compilation of the lists and outflanked the radical groups, many of whose members scurried to get their names on the lists for future apartments.

As the movement's constituency expanded to include tenants in private housing, who had a multitude of landlords, the only target that the movement could effectively put pressure on was the city. Especially after the administrative elections of 1975, when the extraparliamentary Left actually elected a member of the Milan city council, lobbying on behalf of tenant supporters replaced the rent strike and the occupation as the movement's major instrument.

Even the grassroots organizations of urban protest—the loose committees of agitation that had organized the first rent strikes and occupations—were institutionalized in these years. Every major municipality instituted elected neighbourhood councils in 1975–7 (Seidelman 1979). Depending on the neighbourhood and on who lived there, these councils could be dominated by the parliamentary Left or by extraparliamentary groups. Although these agencies had little real power and the disruptive potential of 1968–9 could not long survive in them, hundreds of thousands of people had their first taste of democratic politics within them.

Segmentation and Specialization

Institutionalization implies not only greater organization and the replacement of confrontation by bargaining, but also specialization of function. As urban insurgents gravitated to the complex technical issues of urban plans, other segments of the social movement sector were becoming concerned with their particular issues and their own identities and interests.

The most dramatic example was the birth of a new women's movement within the extraparliamentary Left (J. Hellman 1987; Ergas 1976). Although women's collectives began to appear from 1966 on, it was only within the new Left that women gained the organizing experience, the self-confidence, and the recruitment networks within which to form their own autonomous organizations (Ergas 1982). We shall return to them in the final chapter.

Women were only a particularly dramatic example of what was happening to all of the 'old' new movements of 1969. As general mobilization declined, each social or professional segment—and even the unions, which had pretentions of general representation in 1969–70—began to turn its attention to its own concerns. As early as 1973, students associated with the three major extraparliamentary organizations began to organize as a loosely-linked intergroup around student concerns (Bobbio 1979: 132). At the same time, workers associated with the most radical of the trade unions were being accused of 'corporatism' by the PCI because they ignored the larger interests of the working class.

The end of the protest cycle was thus marked by the growth of interest group concerns as well as by greater organization and a turn to institutional politics. But the process did not resemble the sudden takeover of a mass movement by external bureaucrats; it was more typical that people who had grown up within the movements moved into institutional roles as they saw opportunities for mobilization decline, or that their groups tried to provide selective benefits to their members as collective enthusiasm cooled. Precisely when terrorism was filling the headlines and leading many to fear for the future of Italian democracy, a wide-ranging, but largely unheralded shift from movements to institutions was taking place.

Religious Communities from Movements to Organizations

Was there nothing left of the spirit of *sessantotto*? Not every movement ended within an institution or as an organized interest group. Here and there, durable movement organizations were created around the symbols of autonomy and participation, often signalling their movement origins by using the terms 'spontaneous' or 'autonomous' in their titles. The development of religious protest into a new Christian movement was in many ways the most interesting case.

The Isolotto protests and others like it had peaked by 1969. The decline of the mass movement brought about attempts to organize Catholics around the country. The most successful of these organizations, Communione e Liberazione, was actually a counter-movement. Representing traditional Catholics, it became a handmaiden of the Church and a spur to wayward believers to live a more dedicated Christian life.

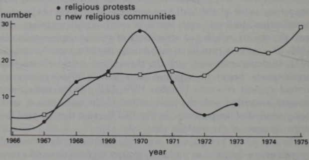

Fig. 12.7 Religious protests, 1966–73, and formation of new religious communities, 1966–75.

From 1969 on, however, progressive groups like the Isolotto community began to meet in a series of conferences, both locally and nationally (Sciubba and Pace 1976). As protest declined, they published a journal, maintained contact on issues of interest to their members, and developed permanent grass-roots organizations. In

Figure 12.7, we have traced on the same axis both the parabola of religious protest from 1966 to 1973 and the founding of new grassroots religious communities from 1965 to 1975.[20] The graph shows that the largest number of these groups was formed only *after* religious protest began to decline. The heritage of protest was organization.

But organization did not simply replace disruption; it was built around it, or at least around its incarnation in ritual, as the story of Don Mazzi and his followers from the Isolotto parish of Florence will illustrate. After they were ejected from their church in mid-1969, the group continued its community assistance programmes, revised its catechism periodically, and engaged in occasional political protests. It survived not by becoming a bureaucracy or an interest group, but by renewing itself periodically around the central symbol of the mass in the *piazza*.

Observing the group in 1985–6, we found in it a combination of informality and institutionalization. At the Sunday assemblies, a small group of activists, mainly women, ask the first questions, keeping their interventions brief and talking as if they were simple onlookers. An observer familiar with the ritual informality of Italian political culture would find nothing strange or spontaneous here.

But organization revolves around the symbol of the mass in the *piazza*. During the weekly assembly, nothing evokes the emotion of the participants as much as the evocation of the injustice done to the people of the Isolotto by the Cardinal all those years ago. The mass in the *piazza* is the group's calvary, its celebration of its suffering and its triumph. It helps it to reconsecrate its unity and to rededicate its members to their purpose. Organization is a product of the decline of mobilization; to survive in a period of quiescence it must retain the memory of the injustice that gave it birth.

IV BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Some observers, like Lowi, see protest cycles as fated to end in institutionalization. Others, such as LaPalombara, have emphasized their legacy of violence. But the conclusion of this chapter is that the cycle of Italian protest ended in a combination of the two, and to some extent through their symbiosis. For although the violence of the Red Brigades was light years away from a factory council, from the block-to-block organizing of a tenants' union, or from the militant quietism of a Don Mazzi, there were connections between the two phenomena which helped to bring about the close of the cycle.

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[20] The data come from Sciubba and Pace (1976). Eric Gorovitz provided the analysis of these data.

On the one hand, if extremists were adopting increasingly violent tactics, it was their violence that drove many of the veterans of 1968 off the streets. On the other hand, if the unions and parties temporized in condemning terrorism, they also absorbed a large number of former movement militants into the 'constitutional arc' (Lange, Tarrow, and Irvin 1988). Each turn of the spiral of violence widened the gap between movements and institutions and forced participants in the social movement sector to choose one direction or the other.

The effect of these processes was cumulative. For example, although the defection of the less militant from the extreme Left gave a clearer field to the extremists, it also deprived them of the social base that they needed to renew themselves, as police surveillance began to thin their ranks. And although the entry of groups like the NAP and the Red Brigades into armed struggle left the extraparliamentary groups more homogeneous than before, each terrorist outrage pushed them further into proclaiming their loyalty to the rules of institutional politics.

This bifurcation of the movement sector produced two types of groups: highly-structured ones with national programmes and memberships, on the one hand, and small cells of militants using street violence, industrial sabotage, and clandestine organizing, on the other. The hard work of repressing terrorism was done by the police and the judiciary, and many paid for it with their lives; but it was the decline of mass politics and the bifurcation of the social movement sector that ended the cycle.

The coincidence of violence and institutionalization can be illustrated by a comparison of the data we collected on union-sponsored public events in Milan and the curve of violence in the same city. The conferences, debates, policy discussions, and attempts to lobby public officials that the CGIL and CISL were organizing constituted an important sign that industrial conflict was being institutionalized. In a well-ordered society, such a process would occur only after a definitive stifling of dissent. But as Figure 12.8 indicates, in Milan these two contradictory trends were present at the same time. The figure shows that the number of publicly organized, non-disruptive events organized by the two main union confederations coincided almost exactly with the increase of violence. Behind the lurid headlines that painted a stark picture of a society going down the drain, there was a slow, patient institutionalization of protest.

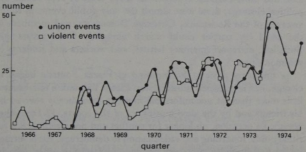

Fig. 12.8 Violence in Milan, 1966–73, and public events of Milanese union confederations, 1968–74.

Returning to Piazza Fontana

I claimed much earlier in this chapter that Piazza Fontana would prove emblematic of the protest cycle in many ways. We have already seen one such way in the crucial role of interactive violence between extreme Left and extreme Right in forming a generation of future terrorists. Piazza Fontana will also show how the symbols of violence helped the political class to reconstitute its unity and how it assimilated the shock of violence through ritual and public spectacle (LaPalombara 1987: ch. 2).

The first reactions to the bombing of the Bank of Agriculture were both repressive and violent. In a series of demonstrations beginning in 1970, both extreme Left and extreme Right made the Piazza Fontana bombing and the deaths it represented symbols of their competing claims. Each left-wing demonstration triggered counter-demonstrations by militants of the extreme Right, leading to street fights, clashes with police, and new victims. The twelfth of December, 1969 became a symbol—not only of the bombing of the Bank of

Agriculture—but of the spiral of violence that seemed to be choking the country.

As suspicions rose that the Piazza Fontana massacre was the result of a plot involving the extreme Right and the security services, the PCI, the moderate parties, and the unions organized a series of demonstrations of their own. These revived the memory of the anti-fascist Resistance, when Catholics, liberal democrats, and Marxists had united against reaction. In these years of deep social and political cleavage, these were almost the only public events in which veterans of the Resistance, Christian Democrats, and members of the small lay parties could march alongside Communists and Socialists, extraparliamentary leftists, and workers and students in common cause.

As the years passed, the meaning of Piazza Fontana began to change. For as passions subsided and Pietro Valpreda's fate became little more than an uncomfortable memory periodically revived by his friends and by the slow machinery of the courts, 12 December became an occasion, no longer for conflict and polarization, but for ritual public mourning and rededication to democracy. Each outrage by the Red Brigades, each new bombing by fascist or other terrorist groups, re-evoked its memory and reinforced the message anew.

The public events that occurred on successive anniversaries of Piazza Fontana provide an illustration. When we study them, we find progressively fewer people participating in violent events and a decline in street fights, and many more peaceful marches and formal meetings held to remember the victims of massacres, and an increasing number of 'ecumenical' events commemorating the victims, rededicating the political class against extremism, and defending democracy.

Politicians would make passionate appeals for peace and order; veterans of the Resistance would march against violence and terrorism; a permanent anti-fascist committee with representatives from the 'constitutional arc' was formed; the families of the victims organized themselves as an interest group—and succeeded in receiving government compensation for their losses;[21] the mayor, DC deputies, and Church officials shared the stage with Communists and unionists to cover the painful memories of 1969 with a carapace of reconciliation.

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[21] *Corriere*, 13 Dec. 1981.

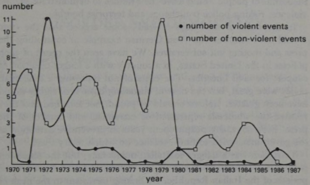

FIG. 12.9 Violent and non-violent 'Piazza Fontana' events, 1970–87.

Figure 12.9 charts in graphic form the changing meaning of Piazza Fontana in the public events organized on that day over the years. With the exception of 1971 (when demonstrations were banned in Milan), it shows a sharp increase in violence in the early years, followed by its equally sharp decline in the late 1970s. The movement of reconciliation, much slower and taking longer to gather strength, is reflected in the growing number of non-violent events, rituals, and public commemorations. As late as 1985, one could still read in the *Corriere della Sera*:

> On the occasion of the sixteenth anniversary of the massacre of Piazza Fontana, the Permanent Antifascist Committee, in collaboration with the Union of Family Members of the Victims of Massacres, has organized a meeting . . . The discussion will centre on the theme: 'Institutions and democratic unity against massacres and subversion.' (13 December 1985)

CONCLUSION

Those Italians who have remembered violence as the only, or even the main heritage of the Italian protest cycle do their country an injustice and cannot explain how it survived its 'years of lead' except through repression. Those who see only progressive institutionalization destroying popular politics must explain why so many thousands of people would leave their homes to demonstrate against violence, risking police truncheons and terrorist bombs.

In the wake of the 'years of lead', some argued that the state should have followed the West German example in controlling the press and rooting out subversives. We have seen the result of such policies in the United States, in a country with a longer tradition of support for civil liberties. The costs of not following a draconian policy were great, but the risks of curtailing basic civil rights would have been greater. Italians should be proud, not ashamed that they resisted the wholesale repression of extremists and control of the press. Even so, many people spent years in preventive detention as the government tried to find evidence on which to try them.

Terrorism was a danger to Italian democracy, but the obsession with it has clouded over one of the richest and and most fecund periods of the Italian Republic. By linking terrorism to the peak of mobilization, the critical difference between mass politics and sectarian violence is obscured and the positive effects of the cycle on Italian democracy are overlooked. Italian democracy survived attack from extreme left and right because violence was the product of the *end* of a period of mass mobilization, when protest in most social and economic sectors was being institutionalized. The period not only saw the survival of democracy; it also brought about democracy's expansion, as I shall argue in the concluding chapter.

Conclusion

DISORDER AND DEMOCRACY

A Decade of Disorder

Following the decline of mass protest in the mid-1970s, an enormous literature was produced about the cycle of protest that was ending. Some of the literature consisted of historical narratives of the movements of the preceding years; some was based on their prolific ideological outpourings; some was ideology *tout court*. Much of it related to the role that unions played in the political economy, and much was marked by a reaction against disruptive politics and demands for public entitlements. These trends were exacerbated in Italy by the rise of organized terror.

But although a large part of the literature on protest came from people on the left, few writers examined in any depth how ordinary people had experienced those years. There were studies of how strike rates related to economic trends; of the public's attitudes towards unconventional participation; and of particular movement organizations; but few studies traced popular collective action itself. With few exceptions, popular politics was not dismissed; it was simply assumed. The masses were embraced ideologically but remained at arm's distance from social research. This is even more so today, in a period of ideological retreat.

If this book has an original contribution to claim, it is that it takes seriously the notion that the history of a society can be written in the actions of ordinary people. Waves of protest break over a society, not because leaders stir up the waters of discontent, but when people dare to claim rights and benefits that they think should be theirs. Protest waves subside when people are satisfied or exhausted, when they are cowed into submission by police or terrorists, or through a combination of all three.

Movement entrepreneurs cannot make these things happen; when mobilization declines, they can only choose their roles from a limited repertoire—the agitator turned journalist, the interest group bureaucrat, the co-opted politician, the advocate of armed struggle. A cycle of protest has its own dynamic, one that is written in the curve of popular mobilization, and articulated by movement leaders who imagine they are responsible for its direction. We should try to grasp these imaginings, for they help to explain where protest cycles spread and the themes that issue from them. But they are the product of the cycle and not its cause.

There are three ways in which the findings of this book can be read: as a study of political change within a particular political system; as an analysis of the dynamics of protest cycles; and as an extended essay on the relations between disorder and democracy. In this concluding chapter, I shall briefly summarize the study's findings about political change, sketch what I think it contributes to our knowledge about the logic of protest cycles, and briefly speculate about its implications for the relations between disorder and democracy.

As I have done in many of the preceding chapters, I shall introduce these problems with a story—or, rather, with two contrasting stories. The two episodes will introduce, first, how much Italian political culture changed between 1966 and 1975; second, the inherent logic of the cycle; and, third, how its outcomes contributed to the consolidation of Italian postwar democracy.

Dancing and Refreshments

On 7 March 1966, the day before International Women's Day, the Milan Chamber of Labour publishes a press release. It reads in part:

> Milanese working women!
> On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Chamber of Labour sends you its warmest wishes. The celebration of the 8th of March . . . is not only an act of homage to you and a recognition of [your] great moral and civil responsibilities. . . . For working women, as well as for their unions, it represents a common commitment to struggle together for the objectives of peace and progress. . . . Working women! Participate with us in the initiatives and demonstrations that we have planned on the 8th of March. Lift your voices in the name of peace and solidarity so that they will be heard all over Italy and the world. Reinforce the unity of Italian women in the struggle to advance the goals of social progress and in striving for a better life for your families. . . .
>
> Tomorrow at 3 p.m., we will offer you dancing and refreshments free of charge at the 'Golden Spider' in Piazza Medaglia d'Oro.[1]

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[1] The item comes from the archives of the Chamber of Labour of Milan. My thanks go to Rossella Ronchi for having found it and called it to my attention.

Pink Armbands and Clubs

6 December 1975. Rome.[2] A long line of women disembark from buses and trains and converge around the Bernini Fountain at the centre of Piazza Esedra. They carry the banners of a number of organizations that have agreed to participate in a rally organized by a group called CRAC, an *ad hoc* feminist coalition. The organizers and *servizio d'ordine*—all women—wear pink armbands. Here and there, groups of young men mill around the outside of the group, laughing and pushing each other around. Some of them carry heavy wooden clubs.

The goal of the parade is to gain publicity for the abortion issue and to put enough pressure on Parliament to revise Italy's antiquated family law. In order to increase participation, the organizers have asked the press to cover the rally and have negotiated with the major extraparliamentary groups—Avanguardia Operaia, Lotta Continua, PDUP-Manifesto— to persuade their members to attend. They have also asked UDI, the major women's group of the Communists and Socialists to send a delegation.

Their negotiating position is simple: they want women from each major organization to attend, but *only* as women. No party banners are to be carried, no handbills publicizing themes unrelated to abortion will be distributed, and none of the groups is to send any male members. The demonstration is to be organized by women, for women; for the first time, neither the parties nor extraparliamentary groups will have a role in planning a major women's demonstration in the capital.

Negotiations with the Communist-led UDI come to nothing, for the Communists are still uneasy about participating in a demonstration that they do not control. Agreement is reached fairly quickly with some of the extraparliamentary groups, but with Lotta Continua agreement is more difficult. The new feminism of the 1970s has been slow to penetrate this organization. The 'feminine question' did not appear on its agenda until its 1975 Congress (Lotta Continua 1975), and only one representative of its women members sits on its National Committee. Bobbio recalls: 'the insistence with which the adjective "proletarian" [was] added to the term "women" demonstrates the essential blindness of the party to the problem' (Bobbio 1979: 161).

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[2] I am grateful to Yasmine Ergas for the firsthand testimony on which this narrative is based.

Lotta Continua eventually agrees to allow its women to participate without party banners, but the rally's organizers become concerned when male Lotta Continua members appear in Piazza Esedra. Some carry the characteristic batons of Lotta Continua's *servizio d'ordine*. Others try to distribute the party's handbills. When the women organizers tell them politely that they are not welcome, they refuse to leave.

At eleven a.m., a long line of women starts moving from the Piazza into Via Cavour, which links the main railroad station to the Colosseum. It will wind around the Victor Emmanuel Monument to Piazza Venezia, pass the headquarters of the DC in Piazza del Gesù, and cross the Tiber at the Garibaldi bridge to Trastevere, where a round of speeches is planned.

But halfway down Via Cavour, a commotion begins at the back of the parade, where a group of Lotta Continua men from the Cinecittà neighbourhood is trying to push its way into the parade; they are rejected, and they respond by attacking the women marchers with pushes and kicks (Bobbio 1979: 163). The organizers rush back to the source of the disturbance only to find a number of roughed-up and outraged marchers and some extremely embarrassed Lotta Continua women. Arriving in Trastevere at the end of the march, these women take the platform and apologize for the behaviour of their male comrades.

I AFTER THE CYCLE

Italian political culture changed fundamentally between these two incidents. At the start of the protest cycle in 1966, the greatest gift that Italy's most progressive trade union could think of offering its women members was the sheer joy of dancing with a man! But by its end in 1975, women are organizing their own demonstrations on behalf of social goals well in advance of those of the parties of the Left. The weakest and least autonomous of the social actors of 1966 are, by 1975, running their own demonstrations, sporting armbands that both reflect their identity and parody the new Left, and organizing to influence a parliamentary debate.

These two episodes epitomize the major changes that occurred during the decade 1965–75. They revolved around the themes of autonomy, the new social actors who demanded a place in the polity, and their role in stimulating reform. Let us survey each of these changes briefly before turning to the dynamic of the cycle and to the impact of disorder on democracy.

From Paternalism to Autonomy

It would be difficult to find a clearer expression of the paternalism that marked the party-dominated political culture of postwar Italy than that of the Chamber of Labour in its March 1966 press release. Women are addressed first as workers and second as pillars of their families. They are patronizingly praised for their 'high moral and civic contributions'; told that they should transcend women's issues and unite with their male comrades in supporting peace and progress; and reminded of their respnsibility to seek a better life for their families.

But women were not the only social actors who were treated like wards by the organizations that claimed to represent them. In the mid-1960s, political parties and their mass organizations still assumed they had a broad mandate to represent people, based either on the loyalty of their members or on the organizations' ability to provide them with selective incentives (Parisi and Pasquino 1980).

As we saw in Chapter 6, students too were treated with paternalism, as when the PCI claimed the right to tell them how to use the occupation. We found paternalism again in Porto Marghera, when the unions tried to smother working class insurgency. We saw it in its most extreme form in the Isolotto parish when the Cardinal told 'his' priest he had no right to make political statements. Italian institutions and organizations had colonized civil society after Fascism and acted as if they had the right to continue to order its forms of participation.

If we believe the surveys, most people in the late 1960s seemed not unhappy with their political parties.[3] But in the universities, in the Church, in the youth federations of the major parties, and in the unions, insurgency was stirring. These institutions had gained a monopoly over representation from the postwar settlement. But by the 1960s, new social groups had appeared, older ones were less dependent on their sponsors, and Italian society had become too pluralistic to bear such a monopoly of representation. The struggles we saw around educational reform, against management, and against the war in Vietnam were reinforced by insurgency against the pretensions of the major representative institutions. Paradoxically, however, these also provided people with many of the symbols and resources that were later used against them.

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[3] Surveys in the late 1960s show that up to 40 per cent of the voting public felt 'very close' to their preferred political party. For some of this evidence, see Putnam (1984) and the survey evidence cited therein.

The women's movement was no exception; many of the organizers of the abortion campaign had grown up politically within, and rejected the hegemony of, the extraparliamentary groups of the new Left (Ergas 1982: 261ff.). The December 1975 demonstration for abortion is indicative of the degree of change since 1966. No one in Piazza Esedra described women as either producers or pillars of the family. No political party or union chose the theme or dictated the form of the demonstration. The rally was organized by an autonomous coalition of women's groups that few had heard of until a few months earlier. Not only were men excluded, but the rally's organizers refused to allow members of the parties and movements to carry their own banners. When the rule was broken, it was in the name of autonomy from male control that the women of Lotta Continua apologized to their sisters from the speaker's stand.

Autonomy from the control of parties, unions, and mass organizations was a demand that went well beyond politics and was a recurring theme in the protest cycle from the beginning. Far more than the theme of workerism, which had inherent limits and was permanently tarnished during the period of terrorism, the theme of autonomy survived the end of mobilization to structure many of the new grassroots organizations of the late 1970s and 1980s. In the women's sector, even the Communist-dominated UDI broke away from party tutelage in the late 1970s (J. Hellman 1987). A permanent legacy of the cycle was the autonomy of individuals from the organizations that claimed a *delega* to represent them.

New Actors in Old Institutions

A second change reflected by the two stories is the expansion of the boundaries of the polity to include new social and political actors. In the party system after the 1960s, there was a decline in the proportion of both unconditional party loyalists and of what Parisi and Pasquino call 'exchange voters' (1980). There was a corresponding increase in independent issue voting and in single issue groups.

A sign of this in the electorate is that party loyalty declined sharply during the same period.[4]

These changes in institutional politics were accompanied by a broadening in the social bases of the social movement sector. Women, for example, had seldom been present in protests at the beginning of the cycle.[5] And when they do first appear, it is in the form of strikers, parents, tenants, neighbourhood residents. It is only towards the end of the cycle that a distinctly feminist strand of women's protest develops and that women see themselves as capable of organizing demonstrations *qua* women.

Another site of increasing willingness to use conflictual collective action was the new middle sectors. At first triggered by the gains of manual workers, middle-class strikes became increasingly autonomous in the early 1970s. The so-called 'autonomous unions' put forward salaried employees' claims even after the main union confederations had begun to call for wage restraint. Models of collective behaviour that had been quintessentially proletarian at the start of the cycle had become a common currency of all salaried employees by its peak.

But members of the new middle strata did not limit themselves to mimicking the workers' salary demands. They organized to demand higher levels of public services, to militate against terrorism and police brutality, to bring about free divorce and abortion, and to improve factory health, psychiatric practice, and the urban environment. They helped to articulate the policy issues central to a mature capitalist economy and forced them on to the political agenda.

An important aspect of the insurgency of these social actors was their affirmation of new collective identities. As we have seen, people seldom demonstrated *in the name of* such identities, but they could often be deduced from the extreme nature of their demands. Nor did these identities appear on the scene fully formed as the result of structural change; on the contrary, they were products of conflict and developed in the course of struggles between insurgents and unjust authorities.

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[4] From the same survey item cited above (n. 3), Putnam shows that the proportion of the electorate who felt 'very close' to their preferred political party declined from 40 per cent in 1968 to 32 per cent in 1972, and to 24 per cent in 1975 (1984).

[5] An unusual case occurred in 1965, when a young woman protested in Rome against the selection committee that had failed to choose her as Italy's representative in the Miss Universe contest (*Corriere*, 9 Sept. 1965).

But new collective identities were often evanescent and shifting. When conflicts were negotiable and claims were divisible, there was no permanent growth of a new identity; it was when authorities were arbitrary and claims indivisible that demands for new goods or increased rights were transformed in the course of the conflict into new identities. We saw such a case in the Isolotto parish in 1968. As Don Mazzi's parishioners encountered incomprehension and opposition, they began to demand recognition as autonomous social actors. Their invention of the mass in the *piazza* was the expression of such a change.

A more destructive expression of demands for recognition appears in the violence of the period. The young men who pushed their way into the line of march in Via Cavour in Rome in December 1975 were not just opposing their exclusion from a women's rally; they were also asserting their own identity in the most primitive way they knew how—by imposing it violently on others. Violence was never *only* the expression of collective identity, but many of the groups that clashed in the streets of Rome or Milan seemed to have little to compete about except their claim to occupy space on the streets and in the ideological spectrum.

What are the cultural and political consequences of claims that are made in the name of new collective identities? Those who expected a permanent re-ordering of social, gender, or occupational roles in Italy were quickly disillusioned. It remains an essentially capitalist society in which sex roles are traditionally ordered and professional hierarchies are based on status, skill, and resources. In the unions, for example, 'when feminism no longer filled the *piazze* with demonstrators, there was a tremendous resurgence of sexism' (quoted in J. Hellman 1987:209). And in the Catholic Church, after most of the insurgents had left the Church, a new group, Communion and Liberation, reasserted the predominance of traditional Catholicism.

But the movements' failure to establish a new structure of social or cultural relations does not mean that the cycle of protest had no significant cultural effects. Consider the women's movement, whose end has often been prematurely announced. Women began to be politically active within organizations—unions, parties, schools, and movement organizations—and it was within organizations that the movement had its greatest impact. The protest cycle was followed by an increase in women's representation on the electoral lists of the parliamentary Left. In the PCI, in particular, the proportion of women occupying responsible roles at the grassroots level of the party grew greatly in the course of the 1970s.

A dramatic example of how collective identities were enhanced through conflict could be seen the very afternoon of the rally in Piazza Esedra. Hundreds of women, outraged by the violence of Lotta Continua's militants in Via Cavour, converged on its headquarters. They burst into its national committee meeting and accused the leadership of sexism and violence. The next day, the head of the Lotta Continua Women's Commission denounced the dominance of 'male power' in the organization. Throughout the city, women met to discuss the outrage.

As the women of Lotta Continua began to meet on their own, the organization's leaders decided to try to 'live with the volcano'. 'The new', wrote Adriano Sofri in the next issue of its journal, 'has erupted into our national committee—an excellent thing for a revolutionary party!' (*Lotta Continua*, 12 December 1975). Once launched, however, the insurgency continued to grow, feeding on years of resentment at the subordinate role of women in the 'macho' culture of the new Left and using the organizational skills and self-confidence that they had gained in years of militance within the extraparliamentary groups. At the party's final Congress eight months later, 'women, workers, and even young people [began] to meet on their own', and the national leadership was left to debate its resolutions in a nearly empty hall (Bobbio 1979: 175–7). The women's insurgency helped mark the end of Lotta Continua as a unified national organization.

In other cases the impact of new actors on organizations was less dramatic. By the early 1980s, when mobilization had sharply declined, the new collective identities of the protest cycle, with their baggage of extremist rhetoric and expressive forms of action, could no longer be detected; but the new actors who had entered the polity in that period had a lasting impact upon the culture of institutions.

For example, a large proportion of the activists who run the largely volunteer network of peace, environmental, anti-drug, and neighbourhood groups today are women. Had there been such associations at the grass-roots of Italian society in the mid-1960s, they would almost certainly have been run by men and would have answered to the party system or the Church. From the secret agents of urban protest women became ordinary participants in democracy at the grass-roots.

Reform Across the Frontiers of the Polity

The abortion protest of December 1975 also illustrates a third aspect of the effects of the protest cycle: that some of the movements of the period had an impact on reform. Social movements usually fail, and when they succeed, they seldom get exactly what they demand. Their rare successes are usually due to the modesty of their demands and to their convergence with the interests of allies within the polity (Gamson 1975). The power they exercise is always marginal, and they can use it only in combination with that of more highly-placed actors.

Students of policy-making tend to maximize the importance of elites and minimize the importance of pressures from below in explaining reformist success. This may be an accurate image of countries with enlightened bureaucracies, such as Sweden or Britain. But in a country like Italy, with its slow-moving bureaucracy, its civil service whose highest levels were recruited during Fascism, and its deep political cleavages, reform from above did not come easily. Even the Centre-Left's early reforms were vitiated by the power of entrenched groups and established elites. The only way to force the pace of reform in such a system is for claimants outside the polity to place new issues on the public agenda and to make alliances—either objective or subjective—with groups within the polity. We saw earlier that many of the issues around which the new movements agitated were placed on the agenda by the old parties and interest groups. The new movements radicalized these issues, making it impossible for the political class to ignore them, and forming coalitions—either objective or subjective—with groups inside the polity. Only when a political elite is sharply divided can groups outside the polity gain sufficient marginal power to affect policy outcomes (Piven and Cloward 1977).

We saw such a sequence in the case of university reform. The issue was first placed on the agenda by academic interest groups, parties, and official student organizations. These were divided to such an extent that, when the new movements radicalized the issue and politicized a broader public around it, it was impossible for the government to pass a restrictive reform law. For years, no reform was passed at all, but this was due to continuing divisions in the academic world and within the political class, and not to the extremism of the movement.

A more successful objective coalition can be discerned behind the newspaper headlines regarding the prison revolts of 1971–4. As we have seen, the prison riots that began early in the cycle had little programmatic content. They accompanied—or at least ran parallel to—a heated parliamentary and journalistic debate over the need for prison reform. But as common prisoners came into closer contact with jailed political militants their protests took on a clearer and more elaborate policy content, in remarkable symmetry with the policy debate occurring in Parliament (Neppi Modona 1976).

Was there a self-conscious alliance between rebelling prisoners, extraparliamentary leftists, liberal journalists, and reformist members of Parliament? Of course not, although, following a particularly violent conflict at Rebibbia prison in Rome, the Minister of Justice actually met with rebellious prisoners to hear their complaints. There was, rather, an objective coalition between groups with different interests and values outside and within the polity, trying to bring about some kind of reform in the dreadful conditions of the prison system.

A more 'subjective' coalition was built across the frontiers of the polity to pass abortion reform. The newspaper record for December 1974, for example, contains both a report of a sit-in in a court that was hearing the case of a sick woman denied an abortion (*Corriere*, 7 December 1974) and, only a week later, that of a UDI-led march for a new family law (*Corriere*, 13–14 December). The years 1975–7 are full of reports of such demonstrations, crossing the frontiers of the polity from institutional groups like UDI to *ad hoc* coalitions like CRAC and to more radical groups.

These were not concerted efforts, and many of the groups' goals conflicted. Sometimes there was a common front attempted between challengers and members of the policy, as there was in Piazza Esedra, but it was more common for such groups to operate independently of each other, but with complete awareness of what the others were doing. The net result was to force abortion on to the policy agenda and to make it clear to policy-makers that there was a constituency that would support reform.

But these demonstrations would not have sufficed on their own to bring about abortion reform; they combined with developments within the political system and in the society. In 1975, following its losses in the local elections of that year, the DC chose a new leadership group that attempted to polish up its tarnished progressive image. To project this new image, they chose not to participate in the parliamentary debate on abortion (Ergas 1982: 270). The PCI meanwhile, in a continued search for a Catholic entente, adopted a centrist stance on abortion.

The bill that resulted, which passed in 1978, was a compromise. It did not grant the right to 'open, assisted, and free abortion' that the demonstrators of Piazza Esedra had demanded. But its moderate language made it possible for the DC to abstain from the parliamentary vote, for the PCI to combine with the Socialists and the lay centre parties in support of the compromise bill, and for abortion to become law (Ergas 1982: 271).

The feminists' demand for a bill that would establish women's autonomy over their own bodies failed. But given Italy's benighted bureaucracy, its powerful Catholic Church, and its divided party system, such a radical bill was politically unfeasible. Had it not been for the pressure of a radical reform movement outside the polity upon a hesitant and divided political class, there might have been no bill at all. The result of an intense wave of struggle was a thin accretion of reform.

II THE DYNAMIC OF THE CYCLE

Autonomy, new social actors, reform: these were the three most obvious changes that resulted from the cycle of protest. But why was there a cycle in the first place? And once having unfolded, why were its accomplishments so limited? Finally, once it was sparked, why did the cycle not consume the entire system and lead to the fundamental changes that radicals and progressives desired? What was the dynamic of the cycle?

Past students of protest cycles have seen them as either generational or as mass psychological phenomena. In Chapter 1 I put forward a model in which the logic of the cycle's development is primarily political. During cycles of protest, I argued, people adopt extreme forms of action, make excessive demands, and organize against elites when political opportunities to do so appear. Mobilization begins within institutional settings where the resources for protest can first be assembled. It rises to a crescendo when a few groups dare to challenge authority with disruptive forms of collective action and are seen by others to succeed—or at least to avoid represssion.

New forms of action are invented to capture people's imagination, to outwit or baffle elites, and to diffuse disruption to new sites. They succeed one another rapidly as their power to surprise declines and as elites devise strategies to counter them. New movement organizations are spawned and old ones are renewed in order to capture support from within the social movement sector, to avoid repression, and to compete with opponents for support.

As people grow tired of disruption and fearful of the repression it triggers, demobilization begins. Reformers whittle down demands and activism is channelled into institutional forms. Some of the leaders who emerge from the protest movements become interest group leaders, others are repressed, and still others settle for reform. The cycle ends with the institutionalization of those movements that are willing to accept reform, and with the isolation, sectarianism, and violence of those who are not. Let us see how this rough sketch of a protest cycle was filled in by the Italian findings.

The Sources of the Cycle

In Chapter 2 we took up the origins of the cycle. I argued that a wave of collective action was triggered both because of a changing grievance structure and when the structure of political opportunity expanded. The structure of grievances changed in two main ways: first because new social groups—particularly immigrant workers and a new, educated middle class—were filling autocratically run factories and poorly serviced cities; and second because policy issues like education and industrial relations had been allowed to languish so long by a government whose power was based on the techniques of patronage and on the appeals of anti-communism and religion.

These grievances and their claimants had little in common except that they appeared at about the same time, among groups outside the government's main support base of businessmen, peasants, and the independent middle class. If they were congruent, it was because Italy at this time was entering a new phase of mature capitalism that triggered a debate among politicians, managers, intellectuals, and union leaders about the requisites of an advanced industrial economy.

Political opportunities also expanded in two directions. On the one hand, in industry, the cheap labour pool on which management had depended for its economic 'miracle' was drying up just as organized labour found a single voice; on the other, in the schools and universities, the children of the new middle class were finding their own voice within the traditional student organizations just as a debate on educational reform was placed on the political agenda.

The framework for this expansion of political opportunities was unwittingly provided by the political elite. For as the DC's centrist coalition shrank in electoral strength, a centre-left formula evolved to detach the Socialists from their long-time Communist allies and to pass a number of reforms that elites across the political system agreed were necessary—economic planning, a reform of industrial relations, of the pension system, and of the university.

The Centre-Left government not only placed issues on the agenda that others could use as a launching pad for more radical demands; by co-opting the PSI into the government, it both created new space on the left and inserted new conflicts within the governing elite, conflicts that could be exploited by opponents. And it brought a party into government that was too weak to direct policy towards reform but which could not afford politically to be identified with repression.

Was it primarily the deeper grievances or the new resources and opportunities that provided the spark for a major cycle of protest? Students of social movements argue this point endlessly without coming to any conclusion. What can be asserted with confidence is the primacy of politics. The new issues around which people began to organize were political ones; the political space created by the Centre-Left was critical in encouraging insurgents to organize; and the political experience that many had gained within the 'old' parties and institutions was a critical resource that they used to mobilize a mass base. The 'new' social movements of the 1960s were born in politics, and it was through politics that they developed.

The Repertoire of Contention

The forms of collective action that people used also evolved within political channels. In Chapter 3 I examined the changing forms of collective action that appeared as the cycle unfolded, showing how protest rose to a peak of confrontation and disruption quite early, and spread to new sectors as it declined in intensity in those in which it had begun.

There were three features of this diffusion process that bear underscoring: first, disruption began institutionally in the context of conventional organized protests and strikes; second, the protests gained notice when 'early risers' broke through the constraints of convention during a brief intensive peak of mobilization; third, the peak triggered a long gentler cycle when others, less courageous but more numerous, saw that the system was vulnerable to protest and used institutional channels to forward their demands.

Our analysis of the forms of collective action *never* showed a predominance of confrontational or violent behaviour. The conventional forms of action were always in the majority, with confrontational forms increasing and declining rapidly between 1967 and 1969 and violence becoming general only towards the end of the cycle. Confrontation, expressive protest, tactical innovation, and new social actors combined during the intensive peak of mobilization to produce one of those rare 'moments of madness' that display political opportunities and system vulnerabilities to activists in other sectors. These brought the protest wave to new sectors, where its disruptive impact was weaker but where routines were disturbed and traditional authority relations were pierced. The cycle rose through disruption but spread largely within institutional channels.

Actors and Demands

In Chapter 4 I followed the spread of collective action from a few central actors—the workers and students—to those who are normally more quiescent, such as public officials, members of the new middle sectors, the urban poor, women, and prisoners. I showed that protest, rather than rising like a single volcano on a plain of consent, was like a rolling tide that engulfed different sectors of society at different times. Perhaps the Italian cycle was unusual for these shifts in the loci of conflict; they certainly help to explain why a single coalition for change failed to develop at any time during the period and why the elite could eventually segment the movement by a strategy of piecemeal reform and repression.

The shifting bases of social conflict had important political effects. It was the spread of disorder to every corner of Italian society that gave the impression of a society under siege, even deceiving some into thinking it was about to collapse. But it also caused those groups had which counted on university or factory conflict to fail, to shift their initiatives to other sectors, or to engage in a desperate spiral of armed conflict.

With the virtues of hindsight, it is clear that the disorder caused by the 'early risers'—such as the university students—was subsiding as latecomers appeared, and that this allowed elites to separate demands from one another, negotiating with some groups, ignoring others, and repressing others. The Italian protest cycle ended through its disaggregation into discrete policy arenas at the hands of a political elite that was most at home with the politics of *spartizione*.

Our findings on the nature of the grievances and demands in Chapter 5 were consistent with what we learned about the nature of actors and enemies. When I looked for order in the immense number and variety of grievances expressed in the protests, it became clear how thoroughly riven Italian society was with conflict. For although it was a country in transition to a new economic stage, it was also one in which the cleavages of classical capitalism were still very deep. The only commonality I could find in the demand structure was the centrality of the state to many conflicts. If conflict did not develop from a host of largely private disputes to a general political cleavage, this was in part because so many of the conflicts were inherently political from the start.

There were two major interpretative frames that emerged clearly from this welter of claims and counter-claims: 'workerism', a traditional ideological patrimony of the Left; and autonomy, a new theme which had as its first target the claim of the left-wing parties, the unions and the Church to dominate popular politics. These two themes combined catalytically in 1967–9 to animate the university students' and workers' movements. But by the end of the cycle, the combination had been transformed into a grisly caricature of its former image, as both workerism and autonomy were invoked to justify the sectarian excesses of the self-appointed prophets of armed struggle.

Movements and Mobilization

In Part Two I analysed three of the key movements that engaged elites in conflictual collective action during this period. Each had its roots in insurgencies within major institutional settings—the factory, the party system, the Church, and the educational establishment—but each broke out of its institutional mould during the peak period of mass mobilization. They all proclaimed the autonomy of their social bases from authority, using contemporary policy issues to create new identities and relying on confrontational forms of action to build constituencies and challenge elites. In the congruence of the forms and themes of these old and new movements there is evidence that they were part of the same expanding social movement sector.

But if there were commonalities in the rise of these movements and in their repertoires and demands, there were differences in their trajectories and their decline. For while the university student movement's hour was brief and was limited by its incapacity to find space within the university, the worker's movement was long and was reinforced by the plethora of groups trying to represent it and by the availability of new factory institutions to organize it. Neither was a case of 'movement vs. organization', for both developed within and outside representative organizations—the unions for the workers and the student associations for the students. However, while the student movement destroyed the legitimacy of the traditional associations, the workers' movement was quickly absorbed by a union strategy of 'riding the tiger'.

The dissident Catholic movement epitomized by the Isolotto community tells a different story. Although it too grew up as an insurgency within a powerful institution, the Church could afford to ignore its claims, and so it ended up a dissenting sect. Yet, like the workers' movement, it too resulted in organization. These dissident Catholics, with their 'old' themes and demands, resembled the 'new' social movements of the decade in their stress on autonomy and in the forms of action they used. Here too, we find evidence of a unified cycle of protest.

Movements and Organizations

Each of these movements either gave rise to or attracted social movement organizations. These organizations, which were the subject of Part Three, played a crucial role in organizing protest, in diffusing it to new sectors, and in urging people to place their claims within broader interpretive frames. They did not substitute ideology for practice; they devised radically pragmatic goals and used confrontational strategies to gain supporters and challenge elites.

Students of social movements frequently contrast organization with disruption, but the diffusion of protest in Italy depended heavily on the efforts of these organizations: first, because organization was a response to repression and to the crisis of the student movement; second, because it was a way of making contact with the workers; and third, because competition for support led to competitive efforts to organize people, first in the factories, churches and schools, and then in other sectors, from the cities to the South to the prisons and the army.

The paradox of these organizations is that their documentary histories are richest for the period after 1969, when mass mobilization had already declined. There is a lesson for methodological purists in this: proponents of the 'new' history 'from below' will find little sign of these organizations in the newspaper record of the intensive peak of mobilization. On the other hand, traditional historical practitioners will find the archives richest with documents, minutes of congresses, and records of organizational efforts for the period when mobilization had already begun to decline.

If we had used only the traditional historical methods, we would probably have overestimated the role of these organizations and underestimated the period that catalysed the cycle—the intensive peak of mass mobilization of 1967–9, in which there were few known organizations to find in the archives. On the other hand, had we limited our attention to the methods of the 'new' social history, we might have focused mainly on 1967–9 and underestimated the complex organizational and political developments of the successive years.

By combining new historical methods with old, computer analysis with case studies, we were able to study the relationship between the intensive peak of mobilization and the organizations that diffused protest to new actors after 1968. Finally, by placing the organizational histories of the extraparliamentary Left alongside the curve of mass mobilization, we could see that organizational encapsulation was not independent of declining mass politics, but was its product; and that the violence and institutionalization at the end of the period were the contradictory outcomes of demobilization.

This leads to one of the most important findings of the research—that the new movement organizations, though they saw themselves as the vanguard of a revolution, were only the most self-conscious expressions of popular mobilization. They 'led' the masses as long as there were masses to be led; but they could not lead people where they did not wish to go.

These findings coincide with Piven and Cloward's findings for protest movements in the United States (1977: ch.5) but not entirely with their conclusions. Like the American 1960s that they studied, the Italian cycle declined as organizers tried to direct popular disruption into institutional channels. But in Italy, mobilization declined not because leaders chose to smother disruption, but because the mass base was no longer available for aggressive strategies. Without a popular base for mobilization, extraparliamentary leaders could turn to existing institutions; they could transform their organizations into interest groups; or they could try to radicalize the struggle through violence. But they could no longer continue as the leaders of mass movements.

Competition and Repression

Much of the disillusionment, many of the internal divisions, and some of the tragedies of the years after 1968 can be traced to this dilemma: that a plethora of movement organizations were being formed, competing with one another for support, and designing increasingly radical programmes as the thrust of mass protest was collapsing. For the decline of mass mobilization not only encouraged elites to intensify repression, forcing some activists underground and causing others to leave politics; it also narrowed the breadth of the movements' constituency, increasing competition, leading less militant groups to disband or enter electoral politics and more radical ones to adopt armed struggle. As we saw in Chapter 12, both institutionalization and vanguard violence were internal developments of the social movement sector during the phase of demobilization.

One of the products of declining mobilization was reform, but it was not the only one. When elites sense that the mass base for collective action is in decline, they can reknit the fabric of hegemony by repression, by press campaigns against violence, as well as by selective reform. The particular combination of strategems used to choke off dissent depends upon the balance of forces at the time and will vary from system to system. In Italy, elites used all three approaches and another as well: they lowered the level of industrial conflict and temporarily broadened the bases of consent by admitting the PCI, the institutional heir of the new voting cohort that had come of age since 1968, into the outer circle of the governing coalition.

III DISORDER AND DEMOCRACY

Despite the triumphant claims of PCI leaders, this 'government of national solidarity' that they supported between 1976 and 1979 was not the harbinger of a new democracy. For it was during this period that terrorists attempted their most savage attacks on the state, that a stiff new law on preventive detention was implemented and supported even by the parties of the Left, and that confidence in the political system declined. The late 1970s were 'years of lead' in which many saw the danger of an authoritarian inversion.

Yet Italian democracy survived that period strengthened by the tests it had gone through. Not only that; the period of disorder had left it with some positive heritages that were not reversed. First, reform itself was a heritage of the period; second, the polity was broadened to include the new actors we have surveyed above; third, citizens began to vote more frequently on the issues and to escape the party tutelage that had divided them between a sordid 'vote of exchange' and a rigid 'vote of membership' (Parisi and Pasquino 1980); finally, the repertoire of legitimate forms of political participation was permanently broadened, the most enduring heritage of the period.

Reform and the Expansion of the Polity

The relation between protest and reform is not a simple one. For instance, many of the reforms of the period were placed on the political agenda before the disorders began, from the early 1960s on. But even these reforms were not easily won. People do not gain reform by acquiescing to authority; they achieve it by daring to demand much more. As in the case of the marchers of Piazza Esedra seeking the right for women to control their own bodies, the political system processes and reduces demands until little may remain of the original vision. But even in that processing, mass politics plays a crucial role.

The inclusion of new actors in the polity was another democratic acquisition of the protest cycle. The most successful case was that of organized labour. It is hard to remember today that, as late as the early 1960s, union militants could find themselves 'exiled' to the most back-breaking jobs and least healthy shops of the FIAT industrial empire. Police regularly fired on strikers. Lockouts, though illegal, were not uncommon. Union organizers could not have dues deducted from workers' pay packets or meet with their members inside the factory. The protest cycle turned organized labour into a full member of the polity whose power—in proper democratic fashion—waxes and wanes according to economic and political conditions.

Voting and Opinion

Italian voters gained a greater degree of independence from the party system during the period. This was in part due to secular factors: to the role of the media in replacing party organizations in election campaigns; to the rise in the educational level of the population; and to the decline of party membership. But it was also due to the demonstration effect of groups that had organized during the protest cycle independently of party: advocates of divorce and abortion, ecologists, neighbourhood groups of all kinds, protesters against capital punishment.

Students of Italian democracy worry about the growing level of alienation of citizens from the political system that the surveys demonstrate since 1968. Italian voters do have a low sense of the efficacy, and little confidence in the reliability and honesty of the political class. But although such system support may be a *product* of democracy, it has never been demonstrated that it is a *requisite* for its expansion. On the contrary, criticism of the political class may be healthy for democracy in periods of democratic consolidation.

Did Americans demonstrate a high level of 'system support' during the early growth of the Republic? Did the British have a strong sense of 'political efficacy' at the time of the first Reform Act? We can hardly employ the sophisticated techniques of today's survey analysts to ask nineteenth-century Britons or Americans what they thought of democracy. The historical record shows massive dissent and searing criticism of the political elite in both countries during their periods of democratic growth. We should remember that Italy—though old in history—is young as a Republic, for before 1945 it had enjoyed true parliamentary government for only three years before Fascism snuffed it out. It remains to be demonstrated that political attitudes that approve a country's government are crucial to the expansion of democracy; not so for its forms of participation.

The Changing Repertoire of Contention

Protest, we have seen, gains its power from its capacity to disrupt. This disruptive capacity depends in part on the strategic position of protesters within institutions and in part from their ability to evoke surprise, uncertainty, even amusement. Protest cycles are the sources of new and expressive forms of collective action. As Aristide Zolberg writes, 'liberated from the constraints of time, place, and circumstance, from history, men not only choose their parts from the available repertoire', but also 'forge new ones in an act of creation' (Zolberg 1972: 205).

But there is an apparent paradox: for when viewed from a historical perspective, the forms of collective action change slowly and are artefacts of structural change and cultural convention. The repertoire of collective action, Charles Tilly argues, 'comes into use and changes as a function of fluctuations in interests, opportunity and organization'—particularly as the result of the progress of statebuilding and capitalism' (1976*a*: 23). As Arthur L. Stinchcombe writes, 'the elements of the repertoire are . . . simultaneously the skills of population members and the cultural forms of the population' (1987:1248).

If Tilly is correct, what then can be made of the rapid and creative changes in the forms of collective action that we found in the course of the Italian protest cycle? Were they only parentheses in the slowly evolving drama of collective action, their inventiveness a riot of contradictory and meaningless expressions, doomed to disappear as participants tire, their support melts away and the forces of order reassert themselves? But if Tilly is wrong, then why does it seem—as his work has amply demonstrated—that the repertoire of collective action evolves so slowly over the years?

In authoritarian or totalitarian systems, the answer is simple. Peaks of popular collective action indeed seem to be mere parentheses in a long dreary saga of repression and demobilization. Even the terms used to describe them—the Prague Spring, the Hundred Flowers—suggest their brief fruition and rapid decay. The fact that these moments repeat one another in the same forms time after time simply shows how successful elites have been in suppressing the expansion of participation; for in societies in which little has changed in the intervening period, each new peak of mobilization will bring a return to the same forms of contention.

But what of societies in which the repertoire of contention can evolve more freely? Is the evolution slow, linear and expansionary, as social democratic faith prescribes? Or is it episodic, halting, and internally contradictory? Although our evidence comes from within a single protest cycle, it is more compatible with the latter model than with the former. Innovation in the forms of protest came in creative spurts during short episodes of contention, on the part of 'early risers' who dared to go beyond conventional expectations for collective action.

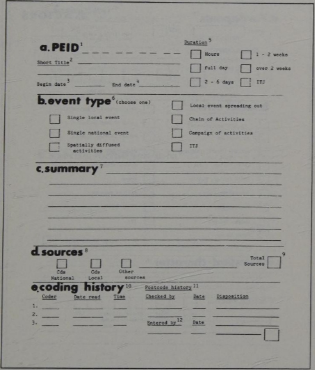
Protest cycles are the crucibles within which new forms of collective action appear. But how then can we explain the slow pace of historic change? Early in the cycle, innovations in collective action never crowd out convention. In its course, the new forms are expressed, diffused, tested, and refined into more institutional ones. New forms combine with old, the expressive encounters the instrumental, new actors come on to the scene and older ones adopt parts of their programmes and their tactics. The permanent tools of popular politics are reshaped in these periods by the encounter between the creative and the conventional.

The revolutionary dreams, the extravagant rhetoric, the violent episodes of protest cycles soon disappear. If they are remembered at all, it is with bitterness, in line with the rule that *post coitum omnia animal triste* (Zolberg 1972: 206). But the critics, who are often rejecting the excesses of their youth, frequently neglect the lasting political accomplishments of protest cycles—their effects on the permanent repertoire of participation. As the Italian cycle ended in violence and demobilization, the forced entries, obstructions, and symbolic actions of the peak of the cycle were gone, but the factory assemblies, the public marches and meetings, and the lobbying campaigns remained. Recalling Zolberg's image, the cycle was 'a flood tide which loosens up much of the soil but leaves alluvial deposits in its wake' (206).

Although popular disorder produced instability and violence, it did not in the long run undermine democracy. In the popular culture of capitalist democracies, it is common for people to associate disorder with breakdown and to link 'system support' with stability. But Frank Bealey has argued that consensual democracies are far more often undermined by foreign invasion and military takeover than by popular disorder (1987). Historically, disorder has sometimes accompanied the fall of democracy, as in Weimar Germany and pre-Fascist Italy. But it has far more often accompanied its establishment, as in France in 1871, or its expansion, as in the United States in the 1930s. Where there is a consensual basis for democracy and elites are not united around an anti-democratic project—as they were in Germany in 1933 and Italy in 1922—disorder and democracy are not opposed.

The Italian case may not be a paradigm of democratic stability. But if its experience can be generalized, it shows that democracy expands, not because elites concede reform or repress dissent, but because of the insistent expansion of participation that occurs within cycles of protest. Of course, in the general decline of mobilization that follows a protest cycle, many forms of participation fall into disuse, and the new actors who so recently emerged on the scene return to private concerns. But once having gained the heady experience of deciding for themselves, they remain available for future struggles. As for the new forms of collective action they have invented, these become an enduring part of the repertoire of popular politics, surviving as a legacy of disorder for the next, and inevitable, cycle of protest.

Appendix A
PROTEST EVENT PROTOCOL



a. PEID[1] ___ ___ ___ ___

Short Title[2] ______________________

Begin date[3] ________ End date[4] ________

Duration[5]
- ☐ Hours
- ☐ full day
- ☐ 2 - 6 days
- ☐ 1 - 2 weeks
- ☐ over 2 weeks
- ☐ ITJ

b. event type[6] (choose one)
- ☐ Single local event
- ☐ Single national event
- ☐ Spatially diffused activities
- ☐ Local event spreading out
- ☐ Chain of Activities
- ☐ Campaign of activities
- ☐ ITJ

c. summary[7] ______________________

d. sources[8]
- ☐ Cds National
- ☐ Cds Local
- ☐ Other sources ______________

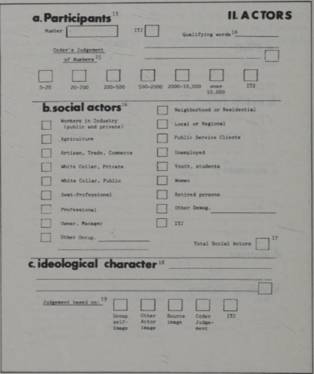
Total Sources ☐[9]

e. coding history[10]

Coder	Date read	Time
1. ___	___	___
2. ___	___	___
3. ___	___	___

Postcode history[11]

Checked by	Date	Disposition
___	___	___
___	___	___
Entered by[12]	Date	___
___	___	___ ☐



II. ACTORS

a. Participants[13]

Number ☐ ITJ ☐ Qualifying words[14] ________

Coder's Judgement of Numbers[15] ________ ☐

☐ 0-20 ☐ 20-200 ☐ 200-500 ☐ 500-2000 ☐ 2000-10,000 ☐ over 10,000 ☐ ITJ

b. social actors[16]

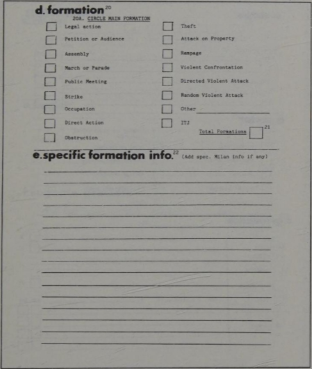
- ☐ Workers in Industry (public and private)
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Artisan, Trade, Commerce
- ☐ White Collar, Private
- ☐ White Collar, Public
- ☐ Semi-Professional
- ☐ Professional
- ☐ Owner, Manager
- ☐ Other Occup. ________
- ☐ Neighborhood or Residential
- ☐ Local or Regional
- ☐ Public Service Clients
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Youth, students
- ☐ Women
- ☐ Retired persons
- ☐ Other Demog. ________
- ☐ ITJ

Total Social Actors ☐ [17]

c. ideological character[18] ________

________ ☐

Judgement based on:[19] ☐ Group self-image ☐ Other Actor image ☐ Source image ☐ Coder Judgement ☐ ITJ



d. formation[20]

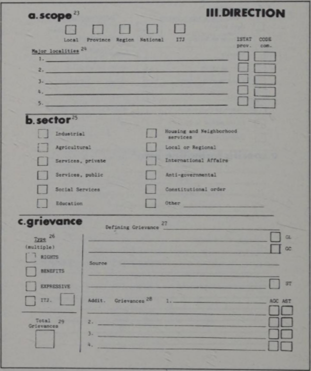
20A. CIRCLE MAIN FORMATION

☐ Legal action
☐ Petition or Audience
☐ Assembly
☐ March or Parade
☐ Public Meeting
☐ Strike
☐ Occupation
☐ Direct Action
☐ Obstruction

☐ Theft
☐ Attack on Property
☐ Rampage
☐ Violent Confrontation
☐ Directed Violent Attack
☐ Random Violent Attack
☐ Other ____________
☐ ITJ

Total Formations ☐[21]

e. specific formation info.[22] (Add spec. Milan info if any)



III. DIRECTION

a. scope[23]

☐ Local ☐ Province ☐ Region ☐ National ☐ ITJ

Major localities[24]

	ISTAT prov.	CODE com.
1. ________	☐	☐
2. ________	☐	☐
3. ________	☐	☐
4. ________	☐	☐
5. ________	☐	☐

b. sector[25]

- ☐ Industrial
- ☐ Agricultural
- ☐ Services, private
- ☐ Services, public
- ☐ Social Services
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Housing and Neighborhood services
- ☐ Local or Regional
- ☐ International Affairs
- ☐ Anti-governmental
- ☐ Constitutional order
- ☐ Other ________

c. grievance

Type[26]
(multiple)

- ☐ RIGHTS
- ☐ BENEFITS
- ☐ EXPRESSIVE
- ☐ ITJ. ☐

Total Grievances[29] ☐

Defining Grievance[27] ________

________ ☐ GL

________ ☐ GC

Source ________

____

________ ☐ ST

Addit. Grievances[28]

	ACC	AST
1. ________	☐	☐
2. ________	☐	☐
3. ________	☐	☐
4. ________	☐	☐

a.object[30]

☐

Secondary objects[31] 1. ☐

2. ☐

e.target[32]

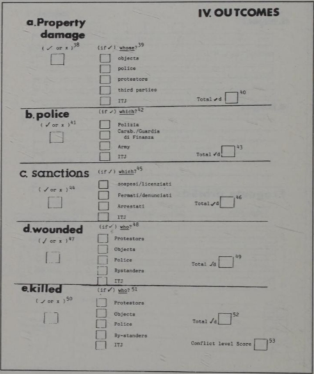
☐

Secondary targets[33] 1. ☐

2. ☐

f.cognate protests (x or ✓) ☐[34]

	(If ✓) short title[35]	Approx.[36] Date	Relation[37]	PEID
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				



IV. OUTCOMES

a. Property damage

(✓ or x)^{38} ☐

(if ✓) whose?^{39}
- ☐ objects
- ☐ police
- ☐ protestors
- ☐ third parties
- ☐ ITJ

Total ✓d ☐^{40}

---

b. police

(✓ or x)^{41} ☐

(if ✓) which?^{42}
- ☐ Polizia
- ☐ Carab./Guardia di Finanza
- ☐ Army
- ☐ ITJ

Total ✓d ☐^{43}

---

c. sanctions

(✓ or x)^{44} ☐

(if ✓) which?^{45}
- ☐ sospesi/licenziati
- ☐ Fermati/denunciati
- ☐ Arrestati
- ☐ ITJ

Total ✓d ☐^{46}

---

d. wounded

(✓ or x)^{47} ☐

(if ✓) who?^{48}
- ☐ Protestors
- ☐ Objects
- ☐ Police
- ☐ Bystanders
- ☐ ITJ

Total ✓d ☐^{49}

---

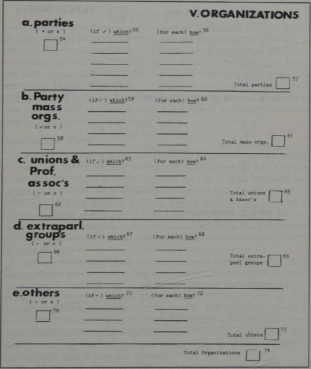
e. killed

(✓ or x)^{50} ☐

(if ✓) who?^{51}
- ☐ Protestors
- ☐ Objects
- ☐ Police
- ☐ By-standers
- ☐ ITJ

Total ✓d ☐^{52}

Conflict level Score ☐^{53}



V. ORGANIZATIONS

a. parties
(✓ or x)
☐^{54}

(if ✓) which?^{55}
______
______
______
______
______

(for each) how?^{56}
______
______
______
______
______

Total parties ☐^{57}

b. Party mass orgs.
(✓ or x)
☐^{58}

(if✓) which?^{59}
______
______
______
______

(for each) how?^{60}
______
______
______
______

Total mass orgs. ☐^{61}

c. unions & Prof. assoc's
(✓ or x)
☐^{62}

(if✓) which?^{63}
______
______
______
______

(for each) how?^{64}
______
______
______
______

Total unions & Assoc's ☐^{65}

d. extraparl. groups
(✓ or x)
☐^{66}

(if✓) which?^{67}
______
______
______
______

(for each) how?^{68}
______
______
______
______

Total extra-parl groups ☐^{69}

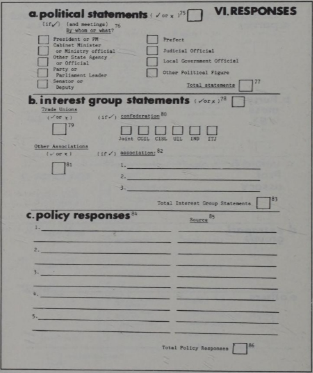
e. others
(✓ or x)
☐^{70}

(if✓) which?^{71}
______
______
______

(for each) how?^{72}
______
______
______

Total others ☐^{73}

Total Organizations ☐^{74}



VI. RESPONSES

a. political statements (✓ or x) 75 ☐

(if ✓) (and meetings) 76
By whom or what?

- ☐ President or PM
- ☐ Cabinet Minister or Ministry official
- ☐ Other State Agency or Official
- ☐ Party or Parliament Leader
- ☐ Senator or Deputy
- ☐ Prefect
- ☐ Judicial Official
- ☐ Local Government Official
- ☐ Other Political Figure

Total statements ☐ 77

b. interest group statements (✓ or x) 78 ☐

Trade Unions
(✓ or x)
☐ 79

(if ✓) confederation 80
☐ Joint ☐ CGIL ☐ CISL ☐ UIL ☐ IND ☐ ITJ

Other Associations
(✓ or x)
☐ 81

(if ✓) association: 82
1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

Total Interest Group Statements ☐ 83

c. policy responses 84

	Source 85
1. ____________________	____________________
____________________	____________________
2. ____________________	____________________
____________________	____________________
3. ____________________	____________________
____________________	____________________
4. ____________________	____________________
____________________	____________________
5. ____________________	____________________
____________________	____________________

Total Policy Responses ☐ 86

Appendix B

ENUMERATION AND CODING OF PROTEST EVENTS

The systematic enumeration and coding of newspaper data for use in computer-assisted historical work on collective action is a procedure that is still in its infancy. Its centrality to research may range from an adjunct to more traditional methods to the sole method used by the researcher. Those who wish to learn more about the method will want to consult treatments like those of Franzosi (1987*a* and *b*), Schweitzer and Simmons (1981), Tilly (1978 [Appendix]; 1986*b*; 1987*a* and *b*). For a more detailed discussion of the procedures used in this study, see Social Protest and Policy Innovation Project (1985), available from the author.

Numbers and Texts

The first and most crucial stage in developing a computer-assisted approach to newspaper files is deciding among quantitative, textual, and a mix of quantitative and textual analysis. Choosing the first of these facilitates data gathering enormously, for it requires the researcher only to enter data in the computer through a standard software package adequate for any kind of statistical analysis and to record only pre-coded information in machine readable form. The research on the violence of the 1960s, like that reported in Graham and Gurr (1969) and in Hibbs (1973), provides adequate models for this approach.

Choosing a wholly text-based approach requires developing a data entry program that is geared to recording and analysing large amounts of textual information. It probably also requires transforming the information into standard word forms and using the techniques of content analysis. This approach requires skilled planning, supervision, and execution, as well as ensuring that the information is recorded accurately and in standard word forms. Wholly text-entry data collection can eventually be combined with statistical analysis, but the process of transforming the verbal information into statistical form is long and arduous.

The approach used in this study is a compromise between the older numerical mode of data entry and the newer textual modes. Using TERAK data entry software and microcomputer hardware, data were recorded in both numeric and verbal form from the newspapers via the protocol in Appendix A. The numeric information was either 'raw' or pre-coded, depending on the type of information, while the text information took the form of either exact quotation from the newspaper sources or verbal summaries based on information provided by the readers. The protest event protocol reproduced in Appendix A makes clear which information was recorded verbally and which was transformed into numerical form.

TERAK provided a number of useful checks on erroneous data entry. For example, it could be programmed not to accept erroneous dates; to require data enterers to complete one item before the next was entered; and not to accept numeric, where verbal information was required, and vice versa. The software was efficient but slow, and problems were encountered in transferring the data to Cornell's mainframe computer, where TERAK's writ did not run. A long and complex transfer procedure had to be used before the data could be formatted for use in SAS (the Statistical Analysis System), the only software available at Cornell which facilitated the combination of textual and numerical analysis. (Had the newer database programs then been available, this procedure would have been greatly simplified.)

Like all compromises, combining textual and numeric data forms had its disadvantages. An obvious one resulted from having to code some variables; our reader-coders had to be trusted to interpret accurately information that could have been recorded word-for-word had pure text entry been relied upon. Another disadvantage was that our textual information lacked the degree of detail and the standard word forms that would have been necessary for true content analysis.

However, combining text and numeric data had a number of advantages. The first was economy: compared to pure textual forms of data entry, reducing some textual data to numeric form reduced the time needed to record each protest event and lowered the cost of analysis. The second was the continued accessibility of the computerized record; numeric categories could be used to retrieve categories of events from the computer files for analysis of the verbal data that were recorded within it. For example, instead of asking simply 'how many strikes included violence?' we could retrieve the verbal information recorded for strikes and examine when violence occurred and the forms it took.

Interacting with data

Finally, having available both numerical as well as textual information in computer files made it possible to edit the files through interactive procedures. By retrieving already-entered text information through the recorded numeric categories, we could either create new numeric indicators or re-code previously pre-coded numerical information. For example, halfway through the data entry process, we found that our numeric 'grievance type' variable (no. 26 in Appendix A) had been badly operationalized for certain types of events. Through the coded numeric categories, we retrieved verbal information and used it to recode the grievance type for all the events. Had we not had this combination of verbal and numeric data available on our computer files, we should have been obliged to return to the protocols, re-examine them, and re-code and re-enter the necessary data.

It is worth underlining the differences between this procedure and what usually occurs in processing wholly pre-coded survey data. Those who have ever found themselves shackled to the rigidly pre-coded interview schedules of survey research will appreciate the advantage of being able to return to a computerized data archive to examine its verbal information base and, where necessary, to use it to amend statistical indicators. The combination of numeric and text data, accessed through an interactive program, also makes it possible for future researchers to revise the data for purposes that never occurred to the original investigator (see Stefanizzi 1986; 1988 for examples).

Events, Units of Analysis, and Non-Events

Once having decided on the kind of information required and computer software necessary to collect it, three additional decisions had to be made: first, what kind of events to look for; second, what would be the unit of analysis; and third, what to do about missing data.

Protest events

Previous research on collective action has either focused on a particular type of action (e.g. strikes, violence) or on all forms of non-institutionalized forms of public behaviour (e.g. like Tilly's 'contentious gatherings'). Once again, a middle route was chosen. Since I was interested in actions that exceeded routine expectations and in which the participants revealed a collective goal, I collected information on 'protest events', a category which included strikes, demonstrations, petitions, delegations, and violence, but which excluded contentious behaviour which revealed no collective claims on other actors. I defined the protest event as a disruptive direct action on behalf of collective interests, in which claims were made against some other group, elites, or authorities.

The concept of the protest event, like all other such concepts, required some operational decisions for inclusion and exclusion. For example, on the non-institutional end, while we excluded criminal violence, we decided that it was important to include street brawls between political groups. On the institutional end, strikes were included, but assemblies that were held to discuss them were only included if a strike actually resulted.

The main criterion used to determine whether a protest event had occurred was whether the actors employed at least one disruptive form of action in the name of a collective goal. If we could not ascertain that this was the case, the event was discarded. We also excluded events in which there were less than twenty participants, unless violence occurred in the course of the events. The reason was, once again, to exclude events whose disruptive impact was insignificant.

Units of analysis

The decision to study the protest event, organized around a conflict between actors and their opponents, made it mandatory to transcend the conventional unit of newspaper reporting—the individual article—as the unit of analysis. For while some articles reported a single protest event, many protest events lasted for more than a day and were covered in more than one article. If we wanted to focus on conflicts, we would have to use the articles as our basis of information but not as the units of analysis.

Consider the strike: a successful strike will often last several weeks, and is often covered in a number of articles. If each article were treated as a separate case, the same information would have to be recorded over and over, entailing great repetitive efforts as well as inflating the weight of those quasi-events in the overall record. The problem of repetition might have been resolved by mechanical procedures, but I did not trust the computer sufficiently to let it decide when one event ended and the next began.

The solution that was chosen was to employ a two-stage process of enumeration—identification of relevant articles, and their aggregation into events. In the first stage, readers who had been assigned a particular six-month period of articles to read and enumerate listed the dates and titles of potentially relevant articles in chronological order on primary data sheets. After being checked for non-disruptive events, the primary data sheets became the basis for the second stage, the aggregation of the articles that pertained to the same conflict into protest events. A series of articles was regarded as part of the same event when three criteria were met: first, that the actors were the same; second, that their grievance was the same; and third, that no more than a week passed between the appearance of the articles.

One advantage of the procedure was that it reduced the amount of data to be recorded and analysed from the almost 20,000 articles that we scanned to the nearly 5,000 protest events that were eventually analysed. Another, more substantive, advantage was that it centred attention on real disputes, rather than on the artificial units of newspaper articles. A major disadvantage of the procedure was that I neglected to analyse, phase-by-phase, the action phases within a particular dispute. (This promises to be a major innovation of Tilly's forthcoming work on the 1828–34 period in Britain.)

The missing data problem

Statistical analysts are often plagued by the absence of bits and pieces of data in an otherwise complete file of information. Traditional historians are not as worried by this problem; they know enough about the context to infer much of what happened. Since ours was neither an orthodox statistical analysis nor supported by the depth of narrative history, still another compromise was fashioned. All the events in our aggregation lists were filed for overall statistical analysis, but those that were missing the most basic information were regarded as 'uncodeable' and were excluded from further analysis.

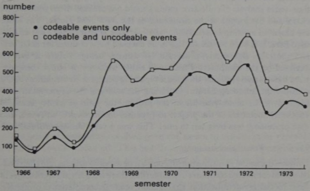


FIG. A.1 Codeable and uncodeable events, 1966–73.

Figure A.1 traces the proportion of codeable and uncodeable protest events for the period 1966–73. Roughly 1,900 of the early 7,000 events we found were judged uncodeable for one of the three reasons listed above. The underlying reason was that harrassed reporters, forced to report on a number of strikes or protests in the same day, would often simply list them in an omnibus article, with no mention of the grievance, of the forms of action used, or of the date on which they began.

That this thinness of coverage was the result of reporters' workload (and not of suppression of the news) can be inferred from Figure A.1, which shows that the proportion of uncodeable events rose sharply with the increase in the number of events and declined as their number declined. Readers with a statistical bent may be puzzled that I decided not to analyse events that I knew had occurred. The decision was based on my wish to analyse only events for which the newspapers provided a minimum of internal information. We can never be certain about the accuracy and completeness of newspaper reports of fleeting and non-institutionalized behaviour; but we can be *more* sure about those for which the newspaper publishes a minimum of basic information. I judged this bare minimum to be: the date of the beginning of the conflict, the grievances of the actors, and the forms of action they used.

From Texts to Files

Readers who encounter for the first time the sweeping graphs of historical time-series analysis of collective action should not confuse them with the pie charts and bar graphs of the *Economist* or the *New York Times*. The latter are based on existing information; whatever else is true of the kind of data used here, it is hard to collect, has to be checked several times for accuracy, and must be elaborately processed by human beings before it can be analysed by the computer. Those who either welcome or abhor computerized data analysis because they see it replacing people with machines should consider the following datum: excluding the salary of the principal investigator, over the seven-year life of the project, the ratio of money spent to reimburse members of the project to expenses for hardware, software, and data processing was over ten to one! This was a very human process.

The stages of data processing

Between the initial identification of relevant newspaper articles and their analysis from completed computer-readable files, there were ten different stages of data processing: identification, aggregation, reading, completion of protocols, two stages of checking, pre-coding, data entry, transfer to the mainframe computer, and formatting for analysis by a software package. Each stage was carried out by different members of the project, each trained for his or her task. Over three years of this step-by-step work had passed before the computer files for the eight years of detailed protest events were ready for analysis. No wonder a colleague at Cornell referred to my office as an *esercito*!

It was not so much an army as a bilingual, cross-generational, interdisciplinary beehive. Reader-coders from both sides of the Atlantic had to read microfilmed issues of newspaper articles that had been published when they were barely born; protocol checkers had to carry out checks on the logical consistency of the protocols and send them back for re-coding when they contained errors or inconsistencies; the protocols were pre-coded by a graduate assistant who had to recognize important conceptual differences like the one between protesters seeking new rights and those who demanded new benefits; the author or his assistant project director then checked every protocol for errors before it went to a data-entry clerk for recording. The transfer of the data to the Cornell mainframe and its formatting into SAS was handled by the assistant project director, who also acted as the general manager of the project.

With the virtues of hindsight, every investigator sees problems with his method and unnecessary steps that were taken. My critics will have their own lists but I gauge my principal problems as being caused by, first, the fetish of thoroughness (insisting that every codeable event that was identified in the newspaper record be read, processed, and analysed); and, second, the fetish of uniformity (once having decided on the newspaper record as the basic source of data, using the same protocol mechanically for each type of event). There were excellent reasons for both choices, but they also caused some problems.

The fetish of thoroughness was partly based on the historian's instinctive distrust of sampling but it also had a more logical basis. Since I was interested in the *dynamics* of protest over time, rather than in finding out what had happened in each incident of conflict, I feared that sampling would produce too spotty a record. But sampling methods might have been devised that would have preserved the progression from one event to the next within particular sectors or time periods. And had we sampled events, we might have had more time and resources available to devote to studying their environment, and in this way learned more about their dynamics than by recording each event.

The fetish of uniformity resulted from the desire to use the same protocol for all the conflicts studied. This had the immense advantage of permitting comparability of analysis for different types of movements, an advantage that is absent in most of the case-study approaches that dominate the social movement field. But it also had some disadvantages. First, there were some conflicts for which parts of the eight-page protocol in Appendix A were not very relevant. For example, the section on the policy outcomes of the conflicts was appropriate for policy protests but not for the ideological conflicts that dominated the last few years we studied. Time would have been gained and coders' patience saved if the protocol had been varied for different types of events.

Second, once having decided on the newspaper record as the central source of data, complementary sources were used only as a separate database, rather than being merged with the information collected from the newspapers. Interactive data entry, which we used mainly to correct existing pre-coded variables or to add new variables from the newspaper-based information, might have been used just as easily to add new information from additional sources. For example: authors like Grazioli (1979) and Roncarolo (1983) had built very careful chronologies, the first of the student movement of 1967–8 and the second of terrorist events from 1970 to 1982. These data came from a variety of newspaper and documentary sources and might have been added to our machine-readable files by the same methods we had used to edit those files. The failure to do so underexploited the possibilities of the method. I hope future researchers will replicate the methods I have used but apply them more fully.

From Event Files to Movements

By underlining these lacunae, I do not wish to underestimate what I take to be a major methodological contribution. By using systematic event files based on public sources, I reproduced an image for a ten-year period of what Italians read about and experienced every day—a society undergoing a period of mobilization and disorder. By examining different parts of the dataset in detail, I analysed the forms of collective action, the actors who used them, and their grievances and demands. Within each sector of protest, I could identify movements from the clustering of protest events around similar social actors, common grievances, and characteristic forms of action. Movement organizations were then identified within each movement.

At each successive phase of the analysis, the place of the statistical record was reduced, and both the recorded verbal information and external documentary and interview sources played a larger role. But I could always go back to the statistical data to verify a new hypothesis or test a notion that had arisen by using more traditional methods. There is a lesson here that can be generalized well beyond the historical time-series analysis of collective action: quantitative history, like its narrative cousin, is most rewarding not when it 'privileges' a particular method and ignores the rest, but when it is organized so as to combine insights drawn from a variety of sources.

For example, consider the analysis of the Isolotto movement in Chapter 8. The case was recognized as important, both from my general knowledge of the period and from the frequency of references to it in the newspaper record. (One report of a church occupation in the South even referred to it as the 'Isolotto of the South'.) The first stage in writing the chapter was to retrieve the verbal information on all religious protests from the computer files. This produced the evidence on their grievance structure in Table 8.1 and their relation to general protests in Figure 8.1. Using numerical coding categories for each city, I then retrieved the verbal information that had been recorded on religious protests in Milan, where the largest number of such protests were recorded, in Parma, where the Isolotto events began, and finally in Florence. This was as far as the computerized record could take me, but a random article that caught my eye indicated that the Isolotto protesters were still active in 1985, so my assistant and I attended their 'masses', interviewed several militants, read their publications, and learned that a complete record of their *Notiziario* was stored at a library in Florence. Based on these primary and secondary materials, I wrote the narrative in Chapter 8.

In the course of analysing the newspaper data, it emerged that the period of religious protests peaked in 1968–9; yet the Isolotto community was still active in 1985! How had they achieved this longevity? Organization seemed a likely reason. I could investigate the relation between religious protest and the organization of religious protest in two ways: first, by examining the case of the Isolotto community from documentary sources; and second, by comparing the statistical incidence of religious protests all over the country to the foundation of new religious communities.

Because I had access to both kinds of information, there was no reason to choose between the two methods. In Chapter 12 I summarize both kinds of information, which converged in demonstrating a clear temporal relationship between the decline of religious protest and the formation of new religious communities. The findings from the statistical and the textual data set were complementary; nothing but methodological purism (or sheer laziness) would have led me to choose one method over the other.

Strikes and other protests

In some ways the most innovative aspect of the research was the inclusion of strikes and non-strike protest events in the same dataset. But analysing strikes from the newspaper data was a continual frustration. First, the press often seemed more interested in strikes against the public services than against the centres of capitalist power. (One could understand this; their readers took the tram to work in the morning and not the capitalist system.) Second, the number of strike events we recorded was much lower than those recorded in official strike records (see Bordogna and Provasi 1979; Franzosi 1988; Regini 1980 for evidence). Most important, the newspaper provided little evidence on how strikes were *settled*, thus making it impossible to analyse their outcomes. These are major disadvantages in analysing strike events from newspaper sources.

But there were compensating advantages. In contrast to the traditional industrial relations literature, the dataset allowed me to compare the curve of the strike wave with that of other forms of social conflict. And using the

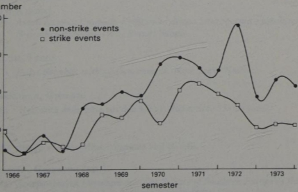


FIG. A.2 Strike events and non-strike events, 1966–73.

same protocol to analyse strikes that I used for the other protest events allowed me to examine the use of non-strike forms of collective action within the strike events (see Table 7.2). Finally, I could show that the strike events—though the most institutional forms of collective action—revealed characteristics that are usually reserved by scholars for 'new' social movements and were often triggered or radicalized by movement organizations.

The curve of the strike and non-strike events for the eight-year period 1966–73 also recorded a major change in social conflict; while civic and ideological protest declined steadily from the first half of 1971 on, strikes continued to increase throughout the 1970s. Figure A.2 records these two curves for the eight-year period. As people began to return to their homes and schools from protesting in the streets and piazzas, the organized working class, which had been on the margins of the polity in 1966, continued to use the most institutionalized form of protest available, the strike, to express its demands.

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